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An Intertextual Study of Narrative Motifs from the Middle Kingdom to the Roman Period

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An Intertextual Study of Narrative Motifs from the
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SUMMARY

The present dissertation is a diachronic study of cultural identity and self-presentation in ancient Egyptian fictional narratives. Cultural identity implies notions such as customs, practices, values and world-views that are implicitly or explicitly expressed in fictional narrative. The texts that are included in the study span from the Middle and New Kingdoms (c. 2055-1650 BC and 1550-1069 BC), and Ptolemaic and Roman periods (332-30 BC and 30 BC- 395 AD) and the material is analyzed within a framework that addresses “narrative traditions,” which is the transmission of cultural identity in the narratives through time. In light of the diachronic perspective of the study, I focus on four principle motifs of Egyptian narratives: priests, kings, warriors, and women, and explore the literary presentations of these within an historical and intertextual context. The project relates to the literate class of ancient Egyptian society and through exploring the motifs above-mentioned motifs within a diachronic historical and intertextual context, the aim of the thesis is to gain an understanding of forming and preserving cultural identity of that specific sphere of Egyptian society through time. The archeological contexts of the material will, where it is possible, be included. This will contribute to identifying, for example, established traditions, as opposed to local traditions.

RESUME

Denne afhandling er et diakronisk studie af kulturel identitet og selv-præsentation i oldegyptiske fiktive fortællinger. Kulturel identitet indebærer begreber, så som skik, praksis, værdier og livsopfattelser, der implicit eller eksplicit kommer til udtryk i fiktive fortællinger. De tekster, der indgår i undersøgelsen stammer fra Mellemste og Ny Rige (ca. 2055-1650 f.Kr. og 1550-1069 f.Kr.), og den Ptolemæiske og Romerske periode (332-30 f.Kr. og 30 f.Kr.-395 e.Kr.). Materialet er analyseret indenfor en ramme, der adresserer ”narrative traditioner,” dvs. kulturel identitet i fortællingerne gennem tiden. I lyset af undersøgelsens diakrone perspektiv fokuserer jeg på fire primære motiver i egyptiske fortællinger: præster, konger, krigere, og kvinder og udforsker de litterære præsentationer af disse inden for en historisk og intertekstuel kontekst. Projektet berører den litterære klasse af det oldegyptiske samfund og gennem en undersøgelse af ovennævnte motiver indenfor en diakron og intertekstuel kontekst, vil det være muligt at få et indblik i selve dannelsen og bevarelsen af kulturel identitet for denne særlige sfære af det egyptiske samfund gennem tiden. Materialets arkæologiske kontekst vil, hvor det er muligt, også tages i betragtning. Dette vil bidrage til at identificere, for eksempel, etablerede traditioner, i modsætning til lokale traditioner.

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(1) General Introduction

The present dissertation is a diachronic study of the presentation of cultural identity and ideas of the self in ancient Egyptian fictional narratives (self-presentation). I understand that one function of ancient Egyptian narratives was to be a tool for forming and preserving a cultural identity by literary means. In light of the diachronic perspective of this study, I narrow down my focus to four principle motifs of Egyptian narratives: priests, kings, warriors and women, and explore the literary presentations of these within an historical and intertextual context.

This chapter presents the aim and scope of the thesis and its limitations, an overview of the research history, and elaborates on its theoretical and conceptual framework of the dissertation. I shall conclude the chapter with a detailed account of the methodological approaches adopted in the thesis and the reasoning behind the choice of methodology.

(1.1) Aim and Scope of the Project

The thesis is a diachronic study of cultural identity and self-presentation in ancient Egyptian fictional narratives. I understand the concept of culture within the theoretical framework outlined by William H. Sewell, Jr.,¹ that it is “loosely integrated,” i.e. that societies are composed of different spheres of activity each of which has its own specific cultural forms; that different cultural movements arise from these different spheres of activity and that centrifugal cultural tendencies may arise within these spheres; that an “integration” which may occur is based on power or domination; that culture may express contradictions as much as it does coherence and that it is not necessarily isolated and static, but subject to constant change and borrowing. “Cultural identity” refers to “the conscious reification of ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and practices, selectively extracted from the totality of social existence and endowed with a particular symbolic signification for the purpose of creating exclusionary distinctiveness.”² This project relates to the literate class of ancient Egyptian society and thus explores the cultural identity of this specific stratum of society through time. In so doing, the dissertation does not address the very complex issue of manuscript dating, and the reader is referred to the references on this subject cited below. Dates of compositions and manuscripts (when possible) are provided in the study, but I analyze the material within a framework of “narrative traditions,” that is the transmission of ideas, customs and beliefs in the narratives through time. The texts included here are narratives spanning from the Middle and New Kingdoms (c. 2055-1650 BC and 1550-1069 BC), to the Ptolemaic

¹ W. H. Sewell Jr., “The Concept(s) of Culture,” In *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing After the Linguistic Turn*, 89-91.

² J. M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture*, 17.

and Roman periods (332-30 BC and 30 BC- 395 AD).³ The traditions are accordingly addressed as Middle and Late Egyptian traditions, and Demotic traditions (Greco-Roman, i.e. Hellenic and Roman periods). As mentioned, the texts belong to the literate educated groups of society, and the outcome of the present study accordingly relates to this stratum of society (estimated at one to ten percent of the population throughout the historical period)⁴ and does not claim to be representative of the entire population of ancient Egypt.

I do not address the much-debated issue of genre classification in Egyptology.⁵ The fictional narratives that are included in the thesis are texts with the common denominator “fiction” in terms of content, i.e. they consist of invented worlds, even though they may feature figures or events that were perceived as historical. Historical precision is not the main goal of these stories, but the past as preserved by the author(s) through the stories and their heroes.

The project focuses the above-mentioned motifs: priests, kings, warriors and women. Through exploring the literary presentations of these subjects within a diachronic historical and intertextual context, the aim of the thesis is to gain an understanding of how cultural identity was formed and preserved through addressing issues such as: which literary tools are applied for cultural identity formation? (e.g. chapter two); what kinds of behavior and models of practice do the texts enforce? (e.g. chapter five); what are the larger social constructions with which particular acts of praise/blame might be connected? (e.g. chapter three); how did different cultural movements in a specific period influence Egyptian narratives? (e.g. chapter four). The archeological background of the material will, where it is possible, be included in the discussions on the historical context of the literary traditions.

(1.2) Research History

The earliest literary texts derive from the Middle Kingdom (c. 2055- 1650 BC) although a number of genres which developed in the Old Kingdom (c. 2686-2160 BC) do display verbal creativity and compositional skill that may have served as an incentive for the later creation of Middle Egyptian

³ The dates here provided follow I. Shaw, ed. *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 480-90.

⁴ Estimates of population size in antiquity are scarcely more than informed guesses and literacy would have varied in different time periods according to occupation, between capital and province, town and country, from restricted to almost non-existent. Baines estimates a 1% literacy rate for the population from the Old Kingdom to the Greco-Roman Period, see: J. Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt*, especially 49 & 67. See also R. B. Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 66-67 & n. 2.

⁵ For discussion and further references on genre, see A. Loprieno, "Ancient Texts and Modern Theories," In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, 39-58; Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 33-36.

literature.⁶ In this section, I shall present three interpretive models adopted in Egyptology for the study of literary texts from the 1950s until present time: the “propaganda model,” the theory of “cultural texts,” and the New British School. In order to gain a clear view of the problems that have been addressed with regards to these models of approaching Egyptian literature, some comments on manuscripts dating are in order.

(1.2.1) Dating and Context of the Manuscripts

In general, there is little surviving evidence that establishes a chronology for the creation of literary texts. The earliest surviving literary manuscripts date from the late 12th dynasty from around the 19th century BC,⁷ and most Egyptologists agree that the production of literary texts does not predate the 12th dynasty.⁸ Another issue is the date of the manuscript as opposed to the date of the original composition. Egyptian literary texts are authored in Middle Egyptian, Late Egyptian and Demotic (stages of language) and written mainly in the Hieratic, and Demotic scripts. Detailed comparison of each individual story with other copies of the same text (when such exist) in terms of variation in language and grammar are not possible to conduct without exceeding the scope of the project. Therefore, when texts do exist in different copies, I have used the most complete version.

Middle Egyptian was considered by the Egyptians to be the language of the classical epoch of their history, and texts from later periods may thus still have been written in that language. The majority of well-preserved literary papyri dating to the Middle Kingdom come from a very small number of tombs, but our picture is slightly enhanced by a significant number of fragments recovered from the Middle Kingdom town site of Lahun at the entrance to Fayoum.⁹ However, many compositions that may thematically and linguistically be placed in the Middle Egyptian literary tradition are not attested before the New Kingdom or later, and scholars still disagree on the original date of several of these texts. One example is the *Prophecy of Neferti* (see below); while some identify it as a Middle Kingdom composition, others date the compositions as far as the New Kingdom 18th dynasty.¹⁰ As regards New Kingdom texts, Baines distinguished two literary phases for New Kingdom literature: a pre-Amarna period where

⁶ J. Assmann, "Schrift, Tod und Identität. Das Grab als Vorschule der Literatur im alten Ägypten," In *Schrift und Gedächtnis. Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation*, 64-93; J. Baines, "Prehistories of Literature: Performance, Fiction, Myth," In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature: Proceedings of the Symposium "Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms"*, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995, 17-41. Both formulate a theoretical approach to literature as a product of high culture and discuss Old Kingdom texts (especially biographies in O.K. tombs) with a view to analysing their role in the development of literary texts.

⁷ S. Quirke, *Egyptian Literature 1800 BC: Questions and Readings*, 9.

⁸ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 45-50.

⁹ Quirke, *Egyptian Literature 1800 BC: Questions and Readings*, 11-23.

¹⁰ e.g.: A. M. Gnirs, "Das Motiv des Bürgerkriegs in Merikare und Neferti: zur Literatur der 18. Dynastie," In *jn.t Dr.w: Festschrift für Friedrich Junge*, 207-65.

Classical Egyptian continued to be transmitted as a continuation of written high culture, and a post-Amarna period with texts written in literary Late Egyptian.¹¹ This distinction offers an understanding of manuscript history, but could remain problematic in other aspects.¹² For example, most post-Amarna texts derive from accumulations of finds such as the Deir el-Medina community, where the builders of the royal tombs lived, and Egyptologists have different views of whether the literary tradition of this exceptional community is representative of Egypt as a whole at this period. This thesis views the corpus as based in Egyptian literary tradition.¹³ Further down in history, Egyptian literary themes and protagonists have even been identified in Aramaic texts that predate the earliest extant Egyptian examples by several centuries, and Greek manuscripts exhibit signs of having been copies of earlier Egyptian originals. All together such circumstances further complicate the questions as to when and where certain literary traditions arise.

Predominantly, ancient Egyptian narratives contain an historical setting, often recognized through identifying historical figures in the texts such as kings and officials (this is different from wisdom texts, which often contain an explicit claim in the text as to when the text was written or by whom). Although the text-internal attributions have been taken at face value (see §(1.2.2)), scholars now agree on the basis of linguistic and content-based analysis that these attributions are fictitious creations of the author(s). Accordingly, there is no evidence that the Egyptians were concerned with accurate citing of the past, and thus anachronisms often occur. The settings of the texts are now recognized as literary tools intended to permeate the compositions with greater antiquity and cultural authority.¹⁴ This means that an identification of a historical setting does not correspond to a dating of the text itself, but it does provide us with a view of how the Egyptian perceived their past.

A final remark concerns the social contexts of the texts. This matter is discussed in detail in §(2), but a few remarks may be made here in order to complete the picture regarding the history of the manuscripts. The social context in which Middle Kingdom literature was created, disseminated, and received, remains the subject of much Egyptological debate.¹⁵ The royal court appears repetitively in Middle Egyptian literature, both as a locational setting, and as a central topic of ideological and moral

¹¹ J. Baines, "Classicism and Modernism in the Literature of the New Kingdom," In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, 157-74.

¹² G. Moers, "New Kingdom Literature," In *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, 686.

¹³ see for example the survey and discussion in: F. Hagen, *An Ancient Egyptian Literary Text in Context. The Instruction of Ptahhotep*, 61-77 with a summary on pp. 77-82; A. Gasse, "Les ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el-Medina. Nouvelles orientations de la publication," In *Village Voices: Proceedings of the Symposium 'Texts from Deir el-Medina and their Interpretation'*, Leiden, May 31-June 1, 1991, 51-71.

¹⁴ G. Burkard and H. J. Thissen, *Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte I: Altes und Mittleres Reich*, 72-3. See also: Hagen, *An Ancient Egyptian Literary Text in Context. The Instruction of Ptahhotep*, 61-3, concerning historical settings in wisdom texts.

¹⁵ cf. Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 64-85.

discourse; it is therefore the most likely place for literature to be created, and from where it was disseminated, though finds of manuscripts in provincial cemeteries demonstrate the wider participation of the elite throughout the country.¹⁶ As noted for the Late Egyptian texts, the manuscripts often derive from groups of finds such as the Deir el-Medina material and it has been proven through surveying the material that even though these text stem from a single community and geographical location, they do nevertheless represent traditional literary texts of Egypt.¹⁷ The Demotic material, in contrast, predominantly originates from temple surroundings from around the 4th century BC to the 2nd century AD the richest source of which is the Tebtunis temple library in Fayoum. This suggests a principal participation of the priestly community in the dissemination of these texts, and perhaps even in their creation, as well as conscious attempts to preserve an Egyptian literary tradition (discussed in §23). In addition to these circumstances, there are the texts with unknown provenances throughout Egyptian history, leaving certain questions about geographical spread of traditions unanswered, and it is possible that texts yet unpublished in museum collections around the world may significantly alter our image and understanding of ancient Egyptian narrative traditions.

(1.2.2) Propaganda Model

In 1956, George Posener (*Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte de la XXII^e dynastie*) proposed the interpretation of Middle Kingdom texts against the political background of the First Intermediate Period (=FIP 2160- 2055 BC) which was marked by political instability before the reunification of the country. Posener argued that the historical context of the FIP was the source behind the utilization of literature for political purposes; a mode of expressing political opinions in order to influence the contemporary attitudes of its audience.¹⁸ Thus, Middle Kingdom authors reacted to the phenomenon of political and intellectual confusion by producing “propaganda” literature to reaffirm their challenged values.¹⁹

Among the texts Posener studied were wisdom texts: *Prophecy of Neferti* and *Teaching of King Amenemhat I*, and a fictional narrative: *Tale of Sinuhe*. All wisdom texts are attested in New Kingdom manuscripts but are written in the Middle Egyptian language. *Prophecy of Neferti* is set in the Old Kingdom and describes Egypt in chaos, the country is divided and overrun by foreigners, the sun fails to shine, and the river has dried up. Neferti predicts the arrival of a future savior king, Ameni, who will

¹⁶ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 78.

¹⁷ See note 13.

¹⁸ G. Posener, *Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte de la XII^e dynastie*, 14-5.

¹⁹ i.e. “propaganda” in support of royal and state ideology: G. Posener, *Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte de la XII^e dynastie*, 17.

reestablish order and protect Egypt's frontiers. Egyptologists identify Ameni as the 12th dynasty king Amenemhat I (c. 1985-1956 BC).²⁰ In *Teaching of King Amenemhat I*, the eponymous king appears to his son and successor Senwosret I and describes an assassination attempt on him. He acknowledges the insecure position of the king and advises his successor that he must constantly be on his guard against treachery and not put his trust in anyone. *Tale of Sinuhe* is attested in several Middle and New Kingdom manuscripts and is written in the form of a biography of a royal official, Sinuhe, who inexplicably flees Egypt when he hears of the death of King Amenemhet I. He winds up as a tribal strong man in the land of "Retjenu" (modern Lebanon) where he defeats a rival strong man in single combat. He then realizes that his life is devoid of meaning as long as he is away from Egypt, isolated from the royal court. After an exchange of letters with the new king Senwosret I, Sinuhe finally returns to Egypt, where he is readmitted into the royal presence, and in due course is buried in a tomb within the enclosure of the royal pyramid, a signal of favor.

Posener reads these texts as a reflection of actual historical events (Historicism), dating each text according to its historical setting. Thus, the *Prophecy of Neferti*, which foresees the restoration of order by king Amenemhat I after the First Intermediate Period, was dated to the beginning of the 12th dynasty, making the text the earliest example of propaganda literature.²¹ The *Teaching of King Amenemhat I* was dated to the same period and Posener argued that its purpose was the justification of king Senwosret's authority after his father's assassination. He further claimed that the continuing existence of the text in the New Kingdom was equally a means by which the court could legitimate the rule of the 18th dynasty.²² As regards *Tale of Sinuhe*, Posener was less inclined to identify it as strictly political propaganda implemented by the court. Rather, he argued, the tale originated from a sphere within the royal court, which on the one hand reflected on the sentiments and preoccupations inside this milieu, while on the other functioned as propaganda for king Senwosret I.²³

Posener did not use the term "propaganda" in his theory. He read the texts primarily within a political context, but with some limitations, as with the *Tale of Sinuhe*. However, his approach is commonly referred to as the "propaganda model" and is broadly debated amongst Egyptologists. Some

²⁰ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 197.

²¹ Posener, *Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte de la XIIe dynastie*, 21.

²² Posener, *Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte de la XIIe dynastie*, 84-5.

²³ Compare Assmann's definition of Sinuhe as a "reflexive" political text. He applies a similar relation between Middle Kingdom literature and politics at court where he distinguishes between operative-legitimizing texts versus reflexive political texts: J. Assmann, "Literatur zwischen Kult und Politik: zur Geschichte des Textes vor dem Zeitalter der Literatur," In *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten: Vorträge der Tagung zum Gedenken an Georges Posener*, 5.-10. September 1996 in Leipzig, 3-22. The author further identifies a certain development allowing a more critical attitude towards king and kingship in New Kingdom and post-New Kingdom tales.

scholars have adopted the model and identified further texts that might fall into this category,²⁴ whereas others have modified the approach to include modern theories of propaganda. For instance, William Kelly Simpson has suggested relabeling the term “propaganda model” to “maintenance propaganda,” which implies a normative model that may exist in any form of literature, including temple reliefs, religious compositions, and narratives, with the purpose of maintaining the political and religious “status quo.”²⁵ Simpson suggests two categories of Egyptian literature: *belle lettres* which are “pure, apolitical, areligious compositions” and Propaganda texts containing “intentional advocacy discourse, either directly so or in the guise of *belles lettres*, overt or covert.”²⁶ He sees the story of the *Eloquent Peasant* (MK) as an example of the latter. The story concerns a peasant who sets off to sell his wares at the royal city of Herakleopolis. His donkey is then stolen from him by a corrupt local official called Nemtynakht who finds a cunning excuse for his theft. The peasant complains to Nemtynakht’s superior, the High Steward Rensi who, impressed by the peasant’s way with words, reports to the king about it. The king then orders that the peasant be detained so that he can continue making eloquent speeches which the king orders to be recorded for his own enjoyment. The peasant then makes nine petitions on truth and justice, which increasingly become more distressed and denunciatory, concluding with a threat to seek justice through a higher court in the afterlife. Eventually, Nemtynakht is punished, the peasant’s goods are returned, and he is rewarded for his eloquence. Simpson finds two interpretations for this composition: one reads the text as critique of the existing regime,²⁷ which is articulated through camouflaged literary devices that would distance the “author” from the text’s embedded message, i.e. the covert model. In this reading, the literary device adopted by the “author” is to place the criticism of the government in the mouth of a peasant, i.e. not a member of the bureaucracy, placing the historical setting of the texts in the First Intermediate period through describing the peasant as a man from Herakleopolis who lived long ago, i.e. because Herakleopolis became the principle city of Lower Egypt during that period, where it exercised control over much of the region. The second interpretation, the overt model of propaganda, questions a contemporary government (i.e. MK). In this reading, Simpson argues, placing the criticism in the mouth of the peasant would still distance the author from court and the happy ending of the story, where justice is

²⁴ e.g.: “Gegenpropaganda.” R. J. Williams, “Literature as a Medium of Political Propaganda in Ancient Egypt,” In *The Seed of Wisdom: Essays in Honour of T. J. Meek*, 14-30; W. Helck, “Die ‘Geschichte des Schiffbrüchigen’: eine Stimme der Opposition?,” In *The Heritage of Ancient Egypt: Studies in Honour of Erik Iversen*, 73-76.

²⁵ W. K. Simpson, “Belles Lettres and Propaganda,” In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, 435-43.

²⁶ W. K. Simpson, “Belles Lettres and Propaganda,” In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, 438.

²⁷ i.e. against royal and state ideology; also in favor of this interpretation: E. Cruz-Urbe, “The Fall of the Middle Kingdom,” *VA* 3, (1987): 107-12; Helck, “Die ‘Geschichte des Schiffbrüchigen’: eine Stimme der Opposition?,” In *The Heritage of Ancient Egypt: Studies in Honour of Erik Iversen*.

restored in the end, would have meant that order had triumphed over evil. Accordingly, because the outcome of the story was a restoration of order, the “author” could be overt in his criticism.

At present, the propaganda model is broadly challenged, because the texts that are often claimed to have an intentional propaganda function have since been dated to periods later than the events to which they were attributed.²⁸ Although re-datings do not render the interpretation of the texts as propaganda impossible, they do position the texts in certain historical/cultural contexts that may significantly alter their readings. In addition, while literary compositions, particularly *Neferti*, may express support of the ruling dynasty, a purely political approach to literature is now considered “very reductive, and fails to account for the texts’ complex and often shifty juxtapositions of alternating viewpoints.”²⁹ In terms of historical setting, new approaches have shown that the historical setting of a text is in most cases a literary device utilized according to the specific topics and genres of texts. For instance, Richard Parkinson has noted that for Middle Kingdom literature, the historical setting for wisdom texts was commonly the “golden age of the far past,” whereas literature, which concerned accounts of more problematic aspects of life, was often set in the First Intermediate Period.³⁰ Another aspect of the propaganda model, which has been questioned, is why such texts would survive in later traditions. For instance, if *Eloquent Peasant* or *Shipwrecked Sailor* opposed the dominant political order, some have argued, they would hardly have been preserved over time, specifically since the ruling power and its supporters would not have failed to notice the “opposing” implications in the stories.³¹ Here, Parkinson notes: “Middle kingdom texts can, for example, be interpreted as directly unquestioning, but inevitably fissured, expressions of their ideology, that is propaganda. Alternatively, they can be interpreted as exploiting faultiness, integrally within their discourse, differentiating themselves from other forms of ideological utterance, either to voice subversion or to co-opt and entrap it.”³² A significant aspect of the propaganda model noted by Parkinson is that “propaganda” implies a one way message, and ignores the distinctive literary features that involve a dialogue between reader and text.³³ Here, Parkinson is referring to the communication between audience and text drawing on Wolfgang

²⁸ J. Baines, "Contextualizing Egyptian Representations of Society and Ethnicity," In *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty-first Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference*, 354.

²⁹ R. Enmarch, "Middle Kingdom Literature," In *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, 666. See also: R. Enmarch, *A World Upturned: Commentary on and Analysis of The Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All*, 59-60.

³⁰ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 47.

³¹ Baines, "Contextualizing Egyptian Representations of Society and Ethnicity," In *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty-first Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference*, 356.

³² Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 40.

³³ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 15.

Iser's reader-response theory. Propaganda thus sets the texts strictly within a functional frame of analysis that ignores the complexity of the texts.³⁴

(1.2.3) Theory of Cultural Texts

In the early 1970s, under the influence of Russian formalism, Jan Assmann raised the question whether a "function" could be assigned to literary texts.³⁵ He first argued against this theory, but subsequently revised his view in a series of articles both inside and outside the field of Egyptology.³⁶ I here summarize the main elements of his views.

Initially, Assmann refuted the notion of art for art's sake, and emphasized the importance of literature's role of expressing cultural norms, viewing literary texts as written forms that have been transposed into a more autonomous state of existence (he argued that, on account of the textual evidence in Old Kingdom tombs, the analogy between tomb and literary creation is closer than that between oral and written literature).³⁷ As a tool of classifying ancient Egyptian literature, Assmann operated with two notions: "functionality" and "non-functionality." Functionality is the purpose for which a text was written and the only relevant parameter for the classification of texts: "Ein Text ohne Kontext, d.h. ohne seine Zweckbestimmung, ist wie ein Wort ohne Determinativ,"³⁸ and genres were determined by function, but in a narrow definition those of literature were functionally non-specific.

Subsequently, Assmann revised his view on literature and ascribed to literature a function rather than seeing it as being functionally or contextually unbounded writings.³⁹ He identified a category that

³⁴ For further discussion of the limitations of programmatic models, see, R. B. Parkinson, "The Dream and the Knot: Contextualizing Middle Kingdom Literature," In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium 'Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms'*, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995, 73-4.

³⁵ J. Assmann, "Der literarische Text im alten Ägypten: Versuch einer Begriffsbestimmung," *OLZ* 69, (1974): 117-26.

³⁶ J. Assmann, "Cultural and Literary Texts," In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium 'Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms'*, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995, 1-15; J. Assmann, "Kulturelle und literarische Texte," In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, 56-81; J. Assmann and J. Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65, (1995): 125-33. This text was originally published in: J. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, 9-19.

³⁷ Assmann, "Literatur zwischen Kult und Politik: zur Geschichte des Textes vor dem Zeitalter der Literatur," In *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten: Vorträge der Tagung zum Gedenken an Georges Posener, 5.-10. September 1996 in Leipzig*. Also: W. Helck, "Zur Frage der Entstehung der Ägyptischen Literatur," *WZKM* 63/64, (1972): 6-26. Helck sees the development of literature from the mention of regnal years and royal acts to literary royal inscriptions, and, similarly, from the mention of a tomb owner's name and the legal documents concerning his cult to autobiography and so on. He drew a parallel to religious literature which developed from ritual texts to theological texts and hymns.

³⁸ Assmann, "Kulturelle und literarische Texte," In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, 62.

³⁹ Assmann, "Kulturelle und literarische Texte," In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*; Assmann, "Cultural and Literary Texts," In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium 'Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms'*, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995; Assmann, "Literatur zwischen Kult und Politik: zur

is “Gebrauchsliteratur,” which preserves and maintains the cultural heritage of a society and terms this category of texts “cultural texts.” Cultural texts, he elaborates, embody the traditional and relevant knowledge of a society, which is important for and expressive of its self-image and self-understanding. Accordingly, cultural texts are part of a normative and formative cultural program; a program which conveys and reproduces cultural identity from one generation to the other through memorization, “Auswendiglernen.” This function of cultural texts is what Assmann terms “identity function.”⁴⁰ Literary texts, on the other hand, have an entertaining function: “Unterhaltungsliteratur.” The boundary between the two domains is blurry and transitions may occur: literary texts may ascend to the status of cultural texts and cultural texts may simply disappear from tradition.

Assmann further argues that, in ancient Egypt, the cultural education was part of the institutionalized schooling of the scribe through which he was introduced to the cultural and moral values of his society. The scribe was meant to learn the “cultural texts” by heart and store them in his memory. The texts thus form part of the scribe’s “cultural memory,” the tool by means of which the society’s identity is preserved through generations and the “central stock of cultural knowledge”⁴¹ that “comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose ‘cultivation’ serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image.”⁴² Accordingly, Assmann argues, ancient Egyptian scribal culture was representative of culture in general, and embodied in a representative way all its culturally relevant values and moral codes, making the scribe the “exemplary Egyptian.”⁴³ Furthermore, he argues that this system of cultural education applies especially well to the Middle Kingdom, and therefore to the classical age of Egyptian Literature. He states that most of the great texts of the Middle Kingdom were intended as cultural texts that functioned in the frame of textual or scribal culture and formed the “cultural memory” of the new ruling class.⁴⁴

Whereas Assmann categorizes most of the Middle Kingdom literature as cultural texts, he recognizes a shift of function in the literature of the New Kingdom. After the Amarna Period, he

Geschichte des Textes vor dem Zeitalter der Literatur," In *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten: Vorträge der Tagung zum Gedenken an Georges Posener, 5.-10. September 1996 in Leipzig*.

⁴⁰ e.g. Assmann, "Cultural and Literary Texts," In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium "Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms"*, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995, 7-11.

⁴¹ Assmann, "Cultural and Literary Texts," In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium "Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms"*, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995, 8. For an opposing view see: G. Moers, "Bei mir wird es Dir gut ergehen, denn Du wirst die Sprache Ägyptens hören!": Verschieden und doch gleich: Sprache als identitätsrelevanter Faktor im pharaonischen Ägypten," In *Muster und Funktionen kultureller Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung: Beiträge zur internationalen Geschichte der sprachlichen und literarischen Emanzipation*, 74-80.

⁴² Assmann and Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," 132.

⁴³ Assmann, "Cultural and Literary Texts," In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium "Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms"*, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995, 8.

⁴⁴ Assmann, "Cultural and Literary Texts," In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium "Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms"*, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995, 9.

states, the situation changes fundamentally due to the “great innovation of entertainment literature.”⁴⁵ Consequently, on one hand, the canon of “cultural texts” is found in the Middle Kingdom texts and their “modern” counterparts, e.g. *Teachings of Ptahotep* (MK) and *Teachings of Amenemope* (NK), and the newly emerging “entertainment literature”⁴⁶ on the other. Assmann provides examples of the “Unterhaltungsliteratur,” in New Kingdom “love songs, Harper’s songs, mythological tales, fables and fabliaux, historical romances, fairy tales and other forms of literary narratives.”⁴⁷ He ascribes these literary texts to an oral tradition of *shm ib*, (i.e. texts that “make the heart forget), which he sees as a tradition practiced in earlier times but textualized in the New Kingdom. He finds evidence of this tradition in Middle Kingdom texts, such as *Khufu’s Court* and/or *Tale of Sinuhe*, in which kings are entertained with a story at court.

Assmann initially ascribed an “entertainment function” to the newly emerging literary texts of the New Kingdom. He found this function represented in the Ramesseum private library (see §(2.3)) of the late Middle Kingdom and identified four functional groups in the traditional educational texts of Ancient Egypt: 1) “Nachschlagen” or books of reference that consist of wisdom literature, 2) “Auswendiglernen”, i.e. cultural texts, 3) “Rezitieren”, magical and cultic texts, 4) “Unterhaltung” or *shm ib* literature. However, Assmann subsequently departed from ascribing an “entertainment” function to these texts and re-positioned them within a non-functional category of literature. Assmann states that in this stage of cultural evolution “when the identity function of cultural texts has been shifted to the canon of classical texts, we witness the rise of a comparatively de-functionalized sphere of literary production and reception which we may classify as belles-lettres without making ourselves guilty of too much of anachronism.”⁴⁸

According to Assmann, the concept of “non-functionality” or “Situationsabstraktheit” refers to a space outside of and independent from the traditional functions of culture. It is a space of wide accessibility in which literature is a form of communication meant to be published or circulated in the modern sense of these terms. This space would correspond to museums, book fairs, libraries, private collections etc. Assmann acknowledges the fact that to define such a space in Ancient Egypt would be rather problematic, seeing that manuscripts were circulating only within the “functional institutions.” Nevertheless, he refers to three examples of private libraries in Ancient Egypt: the aforementioned

⁴⁵ Summarized in: Assmann, “Cultural and Literary Texts,” In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium “Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms”*, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995, 12.

⁴⁶ Assmann, “Kulturelle und literarische Texte,” In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, 78.

⁴⁷ Assmann, “Cultural and Literary Texts,” In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium “Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms”*, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995, 12.

⁴⁸ Assmann, “Cultural and Literary Texts,” In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium “Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms”*, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995, 12-13.

Ramesseum papyri, the library of Qenherkhepeshef from the 20th dynasty, and the Wilbour papyri at the Brooklyn Museum from the Late Period. He finds that all three collections show the same mixture of texts and concludes that *belles lettres*, i.e. entertainment literature “seem to belong to the literary equipment of a priest or physician, somebody who needs written texts for the performance of his profession.”⁴⁹ At this point, it becomes unclear whether Assmann ascribes a “functional” or a “non-functional” context to private papyri collections. Perhaps he is being cautious of contradiction in his conclusion that a de-functionalized sphere of literary production and reception emerged by the time of the New Kingdom resulting in the production of *belles lettres*.

In the early 70s, Assmann’s approach was influential in raising theoretical awareness when studying ancient Egyptian texts in general. However, as with Posener’s approach and its focus on the functionality of texts, this approach deprives the literary texts of the Middle Kingdom of any entertainment value that they may have had.⁵⁰ Furthermore, it separates wisdom literature from “cultural texts” and reduces them to “Nachschlagen,” a categorization which does not do those texts justice. Wisdom literature, but also literary texts, may have been entertaining as well as educating.⁵¹ Most importantly, Assmann does not address the critical aspect of manuscript dating (see above) and his definition of “Gebrauchsliteratur” as solely preserving and maintaining cultural heritage deprives functional texts of any aesthetic qualities: for example, within a poetic notion of aesthetic, recitation literature would be highly poetic functional texts, but Assmann does not provide a clear view on this aspect. Furthermore, the element of fiction,⁵² when such is defined in a text, does not necessarily imply a strictly entertaining function of the text: as will be shown in due course Demotic fiction, for example, was highly entertaining and yet functioned as “cultural texts.” The problem in this context is that Egyptologists rarely take the Demotic material into consideration in literary studies, as the focus in many studies lies on the Classical period of Egyptian history.

Naturally, it is difficult to identify a sphere of “Situationsabstraktheit” in ancient Egypt in which literature was enjoyed solely for its aesthetic value. However, more libraries than the ones Assmann takes into consideration, both institutional and private have been identified.⁵³ The content of such libraries comprises a variety of genres suggesting a more complex intellectual context of these texts. To ascribe a

⁴⁹ Assmann, "Cultural and Literary Texts," In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium "Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms"*, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995, 5.

⁵⁰ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 17.

⁵¹ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 235.

⁵² On fictionality see for example: G. Moers, *Fingierte Welten in der ägyptischen Literatur des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.: Grenzüberschreitung, Reisemotiv und Fiktionalität*, 19-105. See also: (1.2.4).

⁵³ e.g. Quirke, *Egyptian Literature 1800 BC: Questions and Readings*, 17-18; F. Hagen, "Libraries in Ancient Egypt, c. 1600 – 800 BC," (forthcoming); R. B. Parkinson, "Libraries in Ancient Egypt, c. 2600–1600 BC; K. Ryholt, "Libraries from Late Period and Greco-Roman Egypt," (forthcoming); S. Quirke, "Archive," In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*.

strictly “programmatic” or “entertaining” value to texts may result in a parochial analysis of the texts, obscuring any interplay between various aspects of literary genres and functions.⁵⁴

(1.2.4) The New British School

Another line of approach belongs to what William Kelly Simpson has termed the “New British School” of ancient Egyptian literary studies.⁵⁵ Initially, Simpson had such Egyptologists in mind as John Baines who applied literary criticism in his study of the story of *Sinuhe* (and later *Shipwrecked Sailor*).⁵⁶ Today, the designation implies an approach that emphasizes the “relative autonomy and complexity of literary texts as works of art.”⁵⁷ It is a more flexible approach that applies a multiplicity of models and strategies of contextualization. It focuses on philology and, at the same time, acknowledges literary texts as works of art in their own right. In general, the New British School is more concerned with literary criticism than literary theory,⁵⁸ using informed assessments of textual form, context and aesthetic aspects. The following two examples of interpretation of literary texts are representative of approaches of the New British School. The first example is an article by Baines “Interpreting Sinuhe,” the second is Richard Parkinson’s *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark side to Perfection* (2002), which is a study of Middle Egyptian literature.

In “Interpreting Sinuhe,” Baines proposes to study *Sinuhe* as a self-conscious work of literature rather than a text with political aims, arguing that reading the tale as propaganda restricts the autonomy of the work as literature. Baines perceives *Sinuhe* as an artifact in its own right, and suggests that the text, among other things, can be used as a source for understanding a specific period of ancient Egypt or Egyptian values. Most significant in Baines’ article is his discussion of several elements in the text as separate units of analysis. These units are, for instance, the ideological background, the narrative structure and the motifs of the story. In his methodology Baines refrains from using a single frame of

⁵⁴ Parkinson, “The Dream and the Knot: Contextualizing Middle Kingdom Literature,” In *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium ‘Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms’, Los Angeles, March 24-26, 1995*, 73-4. See also: L. D. Morenz, “Zum Oasenmann: “Entspanntes Feld,” Erzählung und Geschichte,” In *Reading the Eloquent Peasant: Proceedings of the International Conference on The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant at the University of California, Los Angeles, March 27-30, 1997*, 53-82. The author considers form and function together and sees that *Eloquent Peasant* served both as entertainment and a texts for intellectual exploration within an “entspanntes Feld” as good (*nfr*) literature.

⁵⁵ Simpson, “Belles Lettres and Propaganda,” In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, 438.

⁵⁶ J. Baines, “Interpreting the Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor,” *JEA* 76, (1990): 55-72; J. Baines, “Interpreting Sinuhe,” *JEA* 68, (1982): 31-44.

⁵⁷ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 18.

⁵⁸ Literary criticism is the study, evaluation, and interpretation of literature. While Literary theory strictly speaking is the systematic study of the nature of literature and of the methods for analyzing literature: J. Culler, *The Literary in Theory*, 1. Though the two are closely related, literary critics are not always theorists. However, not all differentiate between the two, for example the *Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* interchangeably uses both terms in describing the same concept.

analysis. Rather, he uses a variety of approaches, which are also applicable to modern literature, to each of the abovementioned units.

In his consideration of the text's narrative structure and themes, he recognizes several significant textual features embedded in the overall autobiographical framework. Examples of such features are the eulogy of Senwosret I and the fight between Sinuhe and the strong man of Retjenu. Through these features, Baines distinguishes the text as a "virtual compendium of important literary forms"⁵⁹ and argues that the eulogy of Sewosret I, for instance, should be seen in light of a performance context which has been incorporated into the story rather than a propagandistic element. In this respect, Baines departs from the functional interpretation of the text, acknowledging it as a "masterpiece" rich in diversities, that was composed as literature without a *single* purpose.⁶⁰ Another example is his comparison of the element of the "flight abroad" in the text with two examples from the Ptolemaic Period, which deal with the same theme. This methodology corresponds to the New Historicist approach, in which a literary text is paralleled with a non-literary text in order to expose intended meanings (see below, on theory). In his analysis, Baines relates the motive of the flight to Egyptian values and suggests that voluntary exile is to be understood as the ultimate transgression against Egyptian values; something nobody would admit that he did out of his own volition. Therefore, the flight in the story becomes both a general symbol for the guilt of turning away from society and, a particular load of guilt for Sinuhe.

Richard Parkinson's *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt* is the first monograph dedicated to an integral study of the entire corpus of Middle Kingdom literature. Parkinson favors a broader view of literature that involves its cultural context as well as its aesthetic value. In this respect, following the literary critic Stephen Greenblatt, one of the founders of New Historicism, Parkinson considers literature as an active part of the cultural values of its period. He views Middle Kingdom literature as an ensemble of texts that embody the norms of the Middle Kingdom and obey the rules of decorum. He rejects the interpretation of Middle Kingdom literature as "propaganda," arguing that it is a reductive view of the texts, their audience and their originality (see above) and that it distances the reader from such complex aspects of the texts such as diversity, ambiguity, and irony. Parkinson sees that the court was involved in the shaping of the texts and that these texts were integral parts of their culture and, as such, obey rules of decorum.⁶¹

Parkinson is well aware that "ideology" is not the same as "reality." He argues that although texts embody the system of ideas propounded by the elite, which serve to sustain relations of dominance,

⁵⁹ Baines, "Interpreting Sinuhe," 34.

⁶⁰ Baines, "Interpreting Sinuhe," 65.

⁶¹ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 86.

reality might be different,⁶² a fact which is often shown by the archeological evidence. Furthermore, he emphasizes that drawing a comparison with other contemporary fields of discourse is essential and “allows one to model the distinctive social and cultural context of literary discourse.”⁶³ For understanding the purpose of literature, he further draws on Wolfgang Iser’s reader-response theory, the basic aim of which is to describe the reader’s interaction with the text and the author. In this context, Parkinson regards the teachings of the Middle Kingdom as part of the same literary context of entertainment literature rather than a means of teaching rules of conduct,⁶⁴ the assumption that mainly underlies Assmann’s theory of “cultural texts.”

Like Baines, Parkinson refrains from identifying one single approach to ancient Egyptian literature. Both scholars advocate applying several models of approach, specifically within an interpretive rather than a function-seeking framework. They both apply a comparative approach to literature, in which different discourses are juxtaposed. Moreover, both scholars emphasize the necessity of applying approaches to literature that recognize its diversity and ambiguity and regard texts as social artifacts.

As the research history shows, only few studies have addressed Late Egyptian and Demotic fictional narratives within a broader interpretive context. Here the influential study of Gerald Moers is worth mentioning.⁶⁵ Moers studied Egyptian travel narratives (e.g. *Sinube*) within the frame of literary criticism and outlined a theoretical framework that applies three basic theoretical concepts: fictionality, intertextuality, and reception. He identified travelling abroad and boundary transgression as decisive criteria of Egyptian fictionality, accordingly classifying stories like *Sinube* as literary fiction, and read the texts as part of a “universe of texts” with which it dialectically interrelates (intertextuality).⁶⁶ Moers further discussed the contexts of the theme of travelling abroad and boundary transgression as having a certain significance in the culture of Ancient Egypt, and explored certain motifs within a context of rhetoric vs. narrativity, e.g. the dangers of sailing and its metaphors. His work thus offers a re-reading of ancient Egyptian travel literature, namely the *Shipwrecked Sailor*, *Sinube*, *Wenamun*, and the *Tale of Woe*.

Some Late Egyptian stories are seen as simple in comparison to Middle Egyptian literature, and classified as fairy tales based on their imaginary nature, e.g. *Doomed Prince*. This view has been refuted by Moers who argued that criteria such as supernatural powers and abilities are markers of the text’s fictional status. He sees the literature of the New Kingdom as literature in which the cultural elites

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 20.

⁶⁴ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 235. However, Hagen has shown that teachings were also read as authoritative sources for behavioural principles: Hagen, *An Ancient Egyptian Literary Text in Context. The Instruction of Ptahhotep*, 40-1 & 209-10.

⁶⁵ Moers, *Fingierte Welten in der ägyptischen Literatur des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.: Grenzüberschreitung, Reisemotiv und Fiktionalität*.

⁶⁶ Julia Kristeva coined the “intertextualité” critical term in 1967: J. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*.

recount stories that are primarily about themselves, a circumstance that “compensates for the diverse perceptions of living in a problematic time in which it portrays the members of society as contemporaries (Teachings) but, at the same time, offers them roles from a safe fictional distance (poetry and tales), with the help of which one can remain an integral part of the social happenings even in escaping from everyday life.”⁶⁷ Accordingly, the simple structure of many Late Egyptian tales or the lively tone of many Love Songs do not exclude that the contemporary elite society were able to act out their self-perception without consequence by means of the roles and positions offered by extremely complex texts.⁶⁸

Finally, it remains to point out that fewer studies have been devoted to Demotic narrative fiction with focus on themes and motifs and interpretive models,⁶⁹ and fewer have considered the stories as a group within a contemporary historical context. The effort of many Demotists has been more focused on publishing the texts, concentrating on philological considerations and mostly excluding thematic discussions. Another problem in this context is the limitation of the literary studies to either the Demotic or the Greek manuscripts with a lack of communication between the two domains. Demotic narratives are exceptional, in relation to the entire corpus of Middle and Late Egyptian narrative traditions, as they include cycles of stories about the historical (warrior) prince Inaros and his clan who lived during the Saite period (7th century BC). Only a few studies have discussed these stories within a broader interpretive context and even less have investigated their motifs intertextually. The common conception of Demotic narrative fiction remains Tait’s view, namely that the texts were composed and were in use mainly within temple contexts,⁷⁰ but few address the possible contexts where such stories may have circulated. The cycle of Inaros and readings of the stories form the subject of §(4) of this thesis.

(1.3) Theoretical Background

In this chapter, I define New Historicism, which was introduced by the American literary critic Stephen Greenblatt, as the main theoretical framework for the project.

In his influential work, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz argued that the insight provided by common language, philosophy and literary analysis could

⁶⁷ Moers, "New Kingdom Literature," In *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, 707.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ This is further discussed in (4) where citations are provided for the different studies on demotic literature. I here give examples of studies on genre and motifs. For the former: J. Tait, "Demotic Literature: Forms and Genres," In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*. For the latter: R. Jasnow, "'And Pharaoh Laughed ...': Reflections on Humor in Setne I and Late Period Egyptian Literature," *Enchoria* 27, (2001): 62-81.

⁷⁰ J. Tait, "Demotic Literature and Egyptian Society," In *Life in a Multi-cultural Society. Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*.

have a valuable explanatory force in the social sciences. He outlined culture as “a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.”⁷¹ The task of the anthropologist is therefore to identify and interpret the guiding symbols of each culture, i.e. the frame of meaning within which various peoples live out their lives. Geertz’ methodology was to analyze culture as a text that he interpreted within its context. An example of this approach is his study of Balinese traditions, which he described as “a Balinese reading of Balinese experience, a story they tell themselves about themselves”⁷².

Inspired by Geertz’ approach to cultures, the American literary critic Stephen Greenblatt sought to re-embed Renaissance literature in its historical and cultural context. In his *Towards a Poetics of Culture* (1986), Greenblatt argues against the approach adopted by traditional literary criticism such as New Criticism⁷³ in which a literary text is treated as if it were a self-contained, self-referential object, i.e. unrelated to the contexts in which it originated. He argued that New Criticism flattens and impoverishes literary texts by reducing them to “reflections” of a single primary meaning: a totalizing approach that assumes for literature the passive role of ideological reflection.⁷⁴

The emergence of New Historicism was particularly a reaction to Historical Criticism, which saw literature as a “mimetic” reflection of the historical world in which it was produced: the *Zeitgeist* or spirit of its age. New Historicism’s view of history, on the other hand, is mostly inspired by Michel Foucault who refused to see history as an evolutionary process, a continuous development from cause to effect that is reflected in each period. Foucault argued that no historical event had a single cause: rather, each event is linked to a vast net of economic, social, and political factors, areas that were normally seen as unconnected; he thus encouraged the redefinition of the boundaries of historical analysis. Correspondingly, Greenblatt refuses to choose between literature and history; he states “it is, I think, a theoretical mistake and a practical blunder to collapse the distinction between representation and reality, but at the same time we cannot keep them isolated from one another.”⁷⁵ As a result, he prefers to describe and illustrate the idea that literature and the social sphere are always simultaneously engaged in acts of mutual creation. In this respect, New Historicism views history more skeptically than Historicism, arguing that a narrative is inherently subjective and that history includes all of the cultural, social, political, and anthropological discourses at work in any given period. The discourses at work at

⁷¹ C. Geertz, *The Interpretations of Cultures*, 89.

⁷² C. Geertz, *The Interpretations of Cultures*, 448.

⁷³ A movement within criticism that emphasizes close reading of the text of literature and to excludes the reader’s response, the author’s intention, and historical and cultural contexts from that reading.

⁷⁴ S. Maza, “Stephen Greenblatt, New Historicism, and Cultural History, or What We Talk About When We Talk About Interdisciplinarity,” *Modern Intellectual History* 1, no. 2 (2004): 252.

⁷⁵ S. Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, 7.

any given time affect both the author and the text, since both are inescapably part of a social construct. Consequently, texts can yield valuable information about a particular milieu in a particular period.

As a method of understanding texts of the past, Greenblatt, like Geertz, operates with the notion of “chiasmus:” a rhetorical or literary figure in which words, grammatical constructions, or concepts are repeated in reverse order, in the same or a modified form, e.g. “You forget what you want to remember, and you remember what you want to forget.”⁷⁶ Greenblatt applies this notion to understanding the work of literature through its historical context and simultaneously to understand cultural and intellectual history through literature. Accordingly, in his approach to Renaissance literature, the historicity of the texts is juxtaposed to the textuality of history, seeing that the social world was constantly being shaped by the very texts it produced and vice-versa.⁷⁷ A method applied in *chiasmus* is reading both sub-literary texts (i.e. texts that are called literature, but do not classify as such by literary critics) and non-literary texts as documents of historical discourse, side-by-side with the great works of literature, while considering their social context as well. This approach is relevant for Egyptological literary studies, because a “universe of texts” compared with other contemporaneous fields of discourse allows one to model the distinctive social and cultural (“functional”) contexts of literary discourse, identifying parallels and distinctions within same discourses.⁷⁸

Fiction is thus not simply a creation of a fictitious world but constitutes an active part of its surrounding culture. This exchange between the two domains of literature and society is what Greenblatt terms “negotiations” in his *Shakespearean Negotiations* (1988). In other terms, *negotiations* imply that literature or art is connected to the contemporaneous network of institutions, practice, and religious views that constitute the culture in its entirety.⁷⁹ This view opposes Historical Criticism: “...questions asked by traditional historians and by new historicists are quite different...traditional historians ask, ‘What happened?’ and ‘What does the event tell us about history?’ In contrast, New Historicists ask, ‘How has the event been interpreted?’ and ‘What do the interpretations tell us about the interpreters?’”⁸⁰ Thus, viewing history as a social science like anthropology and sociology, rather than just the background of literature. Accordingly, identifying parallels to Egyptian narrative within other fields of discourse may reveal consistencies and longevities of certain traditions, values and attitudes, while distinctions between them may imply their relevance in specific periods or concerning certain subjects (keeping the chances of preservation in mind).

⁷⁶ C. McCarthy, *The Road*, 12.

⁷⁷ Maza, "Stephen Greenblatt, New Historicism, and Cultural History, or What We Talk About When We Talk About Interdisciplinarity," 253.

⁷⁸ As noted in: Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 20.

⁷⁹ S. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, 4.

⁸⁰ L. Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*, 282.

As the task of New Historicism is to dissolve the literary text into the social and political context from which it originated, Greenblatt defines literature's function through Geertz' argument that culture is a set of control mechanisms for the governing of behavior in three interlocking ways: as "a manifestation of the concrete behavior of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which the behavior is shaped, and as a reflection upon those codes."⁸¹ Ancient Egyptian fictional narrative texts do not contain the identities of their authors, and only wisdom texts include explicit identifications of their supposed creator. These are fictitious authors who are- or are perceived as, historical figures, predominantly described as individuals with high social status as a certification of a text's value.⁸² They include, for the entire historical period, kings, princes, viziers and scribes. This group, as stated above, forms the literate stratum of society: they are the authors of the texts discussed in this thesis and it is their expression of cultural codes by which behavior is shaped, and their reflection upon those codes that are here addressed.

However, Greenblatt warns against limiting our interpretation by focusing on each single aspect (Geertz), an interpretation that might result in a literary biography, an ideological study, or a study of the historical "background" of the text, respectively.⁸³ Therefore, the best approach is one of multiplicity that considers these perspectives of the texts against one another. However, New Historicism reminds us that man himself is a social construct, a production of his surrounding social and political forces. As a result, it is impossible to reconstruct the past as it really existed, because there is no link between the ancient author and the present. The historian/critic is trapped in his own "historicity," or context. A modern reader can never experience a text the way its contemporaries experienced it. The challenge, Greenblatt claims, is to find a way of connecting literary texts to history without subjecting them to historical determination or negating their complexity and internal contradictions. It is crucial to approach literature as, on the one hand not timeless, transcendent and autonomous, and on the other as not a passive reflection but an active force in the historical world. While I acknowledge my own historicity, and that I cannot experience a text exactly as it was experienced more than 4000 years ago, I nevertheless attempt to minimize subjectivity through a reflective assessment of relevant methods in my approach that at best serve the purpose of this thesis.

Thus, chapter one adopts the term "marketing techniques," coined by Jacco Dieleman in his contextualization of the London-Leiden magical manuscripts (Roman Period), in order to define the literary function of the priest and his role in narrative fiction. Chapter two considers portrayals of royal figures in fictional narratives, drawing on Keith Oatley's taxonomy of narrative emotions; that is an

⁸¹ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, 4.

⁸² cf. note:14

⁸³ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, 4.

emotion evoked when the narrative world that conforms to the general cultural and social norms concerning the narrative motif is entered. Here, I reverse the method outlined by Oatley and construe the “emotion” of the audience through analyzing the motifs. Chapter three addresses the Inaros cycle (Greco-Roman Period) and audience through intertextuality and historical/archeological context, because the subject matter is situated within a set period from which the evidence is much more abundant. Chapter four evaluates the representation of the ideal vs. bad women through comparison of wisdom texts, and judicial texts based on the hypothesis that an audience makes sense of a text through a process of naturalization,⁸⁴ i.e. bringing it into relation with a recognizable frame of reference.

(1.4) Methodological Approach and Structure of the Dissertation

The main point of departure is fictional narratives, and the project will include published texts and benefit from a significant number of yet unpublished texts. In this respect, I am in a favorable situation, since the University of Copenhagen owns the majority of the material from the only surviving ancient Egyptian temple library (Tebtunis) which includes a great amount of literature in the process of being published through an international research project (International Papyrus Carlsberg Project).

In exploring the cultural identity reflected in the texts, motifs of fictional narratives are juxtaposed with wisdom texts and non-literary texts, e.g. biographies, royal inscriptions and official documents, which refer to these specific motifs. Wisdom texts consist of maxims that instruct its audience on behavioral codes in society and are chosen alongside non-literary sources, such as official documents, because, for an extinct pharaonic civilization, they serve as sources for investigating cultural codes and values: an ethical voice may be compared to actual behavior in society.

The texts included in this project are composed in Middle and Late Egyptian, and Demotic languages. They are written in the monumental hieroglyphics, hieratic and demotic writing systems. In addition to the Egyptian material, a number of texts have survived in Aramaic and Greek translations and/or versions.

Translations are cited in the relevant passages, and where such are absent, the translations are my own, which is mainly the case with Demotic texts. This is because earlier material has been subject to various re-editions and translations, to which I offer no “new” readings, while some Demotic editions of texts may exhibit a focus on philological exactitude that may disrupt the narrative stream in the text.

⁸⁴ J. Culler, *Structuralist Poetics, Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*, 159.

Chapter 2 explores the literary construction of identity through studying the most prominent protagonist of ancient Egyptian fiction through history, namely the priest in his role as magician. It classifies the priest's function in wisdom literature as the embedded narrator of the text, providing it with value and authority through his title, and his role in fictional narratives, where he himself is the one who influences the course of events. Here, a comparison between the most common motifs of magic in the narratives is made with the archeological evidence of magical practice. Finally, the characters in the narratives are discussed individually, and I argue that these were perceived as historical figures. This aspect of the narratives is perceived as the priests' self-presentation: merchandising their self-image as a tool of preserving identity and power as a select stratum in society.

Chapter 3 explores portrayals of royal figures in fictional narratives. The majority of these figures in fictional narratives were actual historical figures, which demonstrates that their authors and audience acknowledged possible or actual failings of rulers, and the texts seemingly identify certain royal figures as culturally "unpopular" or "popular." The chapter draws on Keith Oatley's classification of narrative emotions that are evoked when the narrative world is entered, and which are sparked when the audience recognizes meaning through a shared cultural background. Accordingly, the narrative emotion evoked by the text conforms to the general cultural and social norms concerning the narrative motif. I propose to reverse the process sketched by Oatley and deduce the "emotion" of the audience by way of the motifs. Intertextuality is here drawn upon because it provides an understanding of how an audience of fictional narratives could have negotiated the "messages" in the stories and interpreted their meanings according to their cultural background. Two aspects of kingship, which form an integral historical background to the analysis, are further identified: the ideological representation of kingship, and the notion of royal fallibility. The latter is a development that took root from the Saite period onwards (7th century onwards) and implies the belief that the king fell from the domain of the divine and became subject to the gods' punishment on the same level as his human subjects. Accordingly, representations of kingship are discussed in one section on Middle and Late Egyptian narratives and one on Demotic narratives.

Chapter 4 explores an unprecedented type of Demotic fictional narratives from Greco-Roman Egypt, namely the Inaros Cycle. This is a series of stories, all set in the 7th century BC during the Assyrian invasion of Egypt, which solely concern the exploits of princes and their clans during that period, particularly the prince Inaros of Athribis and his clan. They appear to have been the most popular types of stories of Greco-Roman Egypt, and manuscripts containing "new" stories are still being discovered

among the unpublished papyri in collections around the world. The chapter first discusses the historical contexts of the cycle. It then address the notion of Hellenism in Egypt in order to gain a better understanding of the cultural surrounding in which the demotic stories were composed. Subsequently, the question of socio-cultural exchange is addressed: first through exploring Egyptian literary traditions in an Hellenic context, then through addressing the Inaros Cycle within a context that takes Homeric influence into consideration. A literary analysis of the texts as a whole is then presented, and the framework of the stories is identified through considerations such as motifs and themes. Finally, the stories are paralleled with epic literary traditions, especially Homer, in order to gain a better understanding of the compositions as a whole, and the questions of audience and function is addressed.

Chapter 5 concerns portrayals of the women, but narrows down that subject to motifs of the good vs. the bad wife. Since this thesis has defines cultural identity as subject to variation, the diachronic aspect of the approach helps in defining change and permanence in the representations. First, a brief overview of the terminology that constituted “marriage,” “husband,” and “wife,” is introduced in order to form a better contextualization of the motifs. Then two sections follow: one focuses on the good wife, the other on the bad wife. Each of these aspects is contextualized within two separate historical periods, namely before and after the 9th century BC, which is the period where marriage becomes institutionalized and “marriage contracts” make their appearance. I extract the recurrence of motifs in narratives and compare these with wisdom texts and documentary sources in order to understand representations of the “ideal” as opposed to “bad” wife within a historical cultural contexts. Here, I apply the hypothesis that an audience makes sense of a text through a process of naturalization, i.e. the construction of the reading process on the basis of a frame of reference with which the reader is familiar. Accordingly, wisdom texts, i.e. texts that have an ethical voice, and documentary sources, i.e. the actual behavior towards women, are relevant because they serve as sources for the models of coherence in an extinct pharaonic civilization: the cultural codes which constitute a system of values. This is the context I apply in forming a clearer understanding of the motifs of “good” and bad wife in narrative literature.

Chapter six summarizes and discusses the results of these chapters and considers avenues for future research.

(2) Literary Construction of Priestly Identity

(2.1) Introduction

Various types of literary heroes are represented in fictional narratives of ancient Egypt where categories vary from the peasant (*Eloquent Peasant*: Middle Egyptian), to the court official (*Story of Wenamun*: Late Egyptian), to the warrior prince (Inaros Cycle: Demotic). Among this range of hero types, one remained prominent and consistent throughout the entire historical period of ancient Egypt, namely the priest in his role as the ritual expert, i.e. the magician.

The conventional magical practitioner in Egypt was the “lector priest,”⁸⁵ and his high status in Middle Kingdom literature, where he occurs in close contact with the royal court, may point to priestly involvement in composing the texts, but a higher-ranking position among the elite seems not to have been prominent in early periods.⁸⁶ By the Ptolemaic period, people who acted as scribes seem all to have held positions as officials, particularly those who had priestly or temple connections.⁸⁷ Narrative fiction from this period onwards that concern magicians vary in their designation of the magician: “prophet”, “high priest” and “lector priest,” all recognizably Egyptian priestly titles that were strictly defined within the hierarchy of the native priesthood and carried on a tradition of more than two millennia.⁸⁸ This variation in priestly titles suggests that the priest’s professional connection to the temple, and thus his affiliation to religion, becomes the main factor that confirms his association with restricted knowledge and to secret writings and ritual practice (magic). This is further seen in the topographical affiliation that often is assigned to a priest’s title in the Demotic narratives: e.g. “High priest of Horus of Letopolis” or “Prophet of Atum” in “Heliopolis” etc. At the same time, as noted by John Tait,⁸⁹ narratives from this period (i.e. Greco-Roman period) mostly derive from temple contexts, the richest source of which being the temple of Tebtunis in Fayoum,⁹⁰ and a remarkable number of

⁸⁵ Terminology is discussed below. For the magician priest cf. R. K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 220ff.

⁸⁶ Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt*, 51.

⁸⁷ See E. Seidl, *Demotische Urkundenlehre nach den frühptolemäischen Texten*, 3-5; E. Seidl, *Ägyptische Rechtsgeschichte der Saiten- und Perserzeit*, 10-13; Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt*, 77.

⁸⁸ For titles in the Middle and New Kingdoms for example: *LÄ* 4, 1084-97; B.J.J. Haring, *Divine Households. Administrative and Economic Aspects of the New Kingdom Royal Memorial Temples in Western Thebes*, 3-7. Greco-Roman Period: J. Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 203ff.

⁸⁹ Tait, “Demotic Literature and Egyptian Society,” In *Life in a Multi-cultural Society. Egypt from Cambyse to Constantine and Beyond*, 303-10.

⁹⁰ In general, see for example: S. Lippert and M. Schentuleit, eds., *Tebtynis und Soknopaiu Nesos: Leben im römischen Fajum. Akten des Internationalen Symposiums vom 11. bis 13. Dezember 2003 in Sommerhausen bei Würzburg*; V. Rondot, *Tebtynis II: le temple de Soknebtynis et son dromos*. For texts from the Tebtunis temple library, see: K. Ryholt, “On the Contents and Nature of the Tebtunis Temple Library: A Status Report,” In *Tebtynis und*

these stories conformingly concern priests in their function as magicians. Since Demotic was no longer used for documentation during this period, Tait argues, the priests must be the only literate group in this script and therefore, the only writers and readers of the texts.⁹¹ Thus, in Tait's view, the temples become repositories of written knowledge. In this context, temple texts, stelae that priests set up in the vicinity of the temple building, as well as literary texts provide information that should be regarded as a conscious effort on the part of the priests to construe an ideal and official image of priestly life for the outer world.⁹²

The present chapter specifically explores this self-presentation of the priests in Egyptian fictional narratives. In disagreement with Tait, that the narratives were only read in temple contexts, the present chapter argues for a much broader reception, especially for the Hellenistic and Roman periods,⁹³ which is further substantiated by the survival of motifs and stories in other languages and cultures. Accordingly, priests would have been key mediators between the boundary of temples, restricted knowledge and intercultural encounters, controlling and merchandising their self-image. When possible, the archeological context of the manuscripts is also discussed in order to gain a better understanding of the geographic distribution and popularity of the texts.

The first section discusses the literary function of the magician priest. It distinguishes between his role in wisdom literature where he figures as the embedded narrator of the text providing it value and authority through his title, and his role in fictional narratives where he himself is the one who influences the course of events. The second section discusses the archeological and literary context of the priest as a magician and expert in ritual and secret knowledge. Here, some of the most common motifs in the narratives are compared with the archeological evidence. The final section is devoted to the characters in the narratives, which are each discussed separately. I argue that these characters were perceived as historical figures, and, when possible, I link some of the protagonists to actual individuals from the past, arguing that the ancient monuments could have served as an inspiration for constructing literary heroes. This practice of ascribing historicity to the hero figures is perceived as a tool of preserving identity and power, elevating the priests to members of a select sphere in society.

Soknopaiu Nesos: Leben im römerzeitlichen Fajum. Akten des Internationalen Symposions vom 11. bis 13. Dezember 2003 in Sommerhausen bei Würzburg, 141-70.

⁹¹ Tait, "Demotic Literature and Egyptian Society," In *Life in a Multi-cultural Society. Egypt from Cambyes to Constantine and Beyond*, 306.

⁹² Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 204.

⁹³ See also discussion on portrayals of priests in Greek and Latin literature (4.3.2).

(2.2) The Literary Function of the Priest

The literary function of the priest is twofold. On the one hand, he provides a “marketing”⁹⁴ value to texts where he appears as a composer of wisdom texts, an inventor of magical potions, or the discoverer of ancient manuscripts. In this context, the priest’s title is the literary tool that enforces the authority of the text. I shall list three examples that illustrate this literary function. The first is the *Instruction of Ptahhotep*,⁹⁵ a wisdom text allegedly composed by the “vizier” and “God’s father” (*it ntr*) Ptahhotep. The second is a prescription for a divination ritual (pLondon-Leiden 4/1-22)⁹⁶ that supposedly makes a god appear in a dream and answer any question the practitioner poses. Here the text defines the ritual as one of which the “great god” Imhotep, the high priest of Memphis who was deified in the Saite period, made frequent use (l. 1).⁹⁷ The third example is spell 167-69 of the *Book of the Dead*, which certifies the high priest Khamwase as its actual discoverer amongst ancient magical texts beneath the head of an entombed mummy.⁹⁸ Accordingly, by ascribing these texts to famous priests and ritual experts, the texts become incorporated in the confines of Egyptian tradition, removing any possible doubt about the validity of their contents.⁹⁹ Accordingly, the literary function of the priestly title is in this context, to provide a reliable value to the text.

On the other hand, the literary function of the priest is his role in narrative fiction where he himself is the one who influences the course of events in the tales through utilizing his magical skills.¹⁰⁰ Narrative fiction has an external narrator telling the story of the composition as to *how* the priest influenced history, while the priest himself functions as the embedded narrator of wisdom texts as he *who* communicates with history. Consequently, on the one hand, the priest plays an informative role

⁹⁴ “Marketing technique” is a term applied by Jacco Dieleman with regards to magical spells. I find his observation applicable to narrative literature in general. He states: “I assume that the composers and compilers of the spells made use only of those scripts, languages, divine names and textual formats that they considered to be efficacious in a magical ritual... those marketing techniques [...] could survive several phases of redaction that were in line with the readers and editors’ ideas [...] thus] provid[ing] insight in the cultural and social identities of the producers and users of the magical spells.” Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 23. See also: D. Agut-Labordère and M. Chauveau, *Héros, magiciens et sages oubliés de l’Égypte ancienne: une anthologie de la littérature en égyptien démotique*.

⁹⁵ Several redactions of this text are attested for the Middle and New Kingdom. Edition that includes several versions of the text: Z. Žába, *Les Maximes de Ptahhotep*. Latest treatment of the text: Hagen, *An Ancient Egyptian Literary Text in Context. The Instruction of Ptahhotep*.

⁹⁶ cf. Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 123ff. Translation in Appendix 4.3.A.

⁹⁷ The formula is entirely written in Demotic (l. 1-8 and 20-22), while the invocation is in Greek.

⁹⁸ F. Gomaà, *Chaemwese, Sohn Ramses’ II. und Hoherpriester von Memphis*, 44, 63 (translation), 110ff. and 101-6 (transcription).

⁹⁹ Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 126. Dieleman notes this use for the presence of Imhotep in London-Leiden magical text. I merely add more examples here to his conclusions regarding the function of the characters.

¹⁰⁰ Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 222.

towards his audience in wisdom texts, where he remains outside the story and his textual role is restricted to rendering the message of the embedded text as a reliable and authoritative figure for the audience by means of his title and his historical renown.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, his magical capacities form his main attributes in narrative fiction where he himself is the one who may trespass the ideal rules of conduct that he advocates in wisdom texts, and he himself may serve as the one who influences the state of affairs in his surroundings. These two functions demonstrate two main ideological representations of the priest: the sage and the ritual expert, both of which may be positioned as those who influence culture and history.

(2.3) The Magician Priest, Archeological and Literary Contexts

Magicians in fictional narratives hold priestly titles,¹⁰² and are most commonly referred to with the title “chief lector priest” (*hry hb.t hry tp*), where *hry hb.t*, literally means “he who carries the festival scroll.”¹⁰³ The title was specifically associated with magical practice, and in Late Egyptian and Demotic it is abbreviated to *hr(y) tp* (Late Egyptian) and *hr(y) tb/tm* (Demotic).¹⁰⁴ Apart from this designation, the titles (*stne*),¹⁰⁵ commonly translated as “high priest”, and ‘god’s servant’ (*hm ntr*)¹⁰⁶ are common for Demotic stories. The former originates from the priestly title ‘Sem’ or, since the nineteenth dynasty, ‘Setem’, which the high priest of Ptah traditionally held in addition to the title “chief of the leaders of the craftsmen.”¹⁰⁷ Considering the rather limited knowledge about specific priestly titles and offices, conclusions about why a given priestly title was chosen above another can only be speculative. One observation may be made, however, which is that in Middle and Late Egyptian narratives the magicians

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² There is one exception, the character Djedi in *Cheops and the Magicians*, who does not hold a priestly title. Nevertheless he utters “his words of magic” *ddw.t=fm hk3* (8, 20 & 25). He also reveals essential attributes of a person knowledgeable in the ritual arts through mastering script and language and being connected with Thoth: Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 225, with further references.

¹⁰³ A comprehensive work on the subject of magical practice is Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*. For magician priest, cf. S. Sauneron, *Les prêtres de l'ancienne Égypte*; Y. Koenig, *Magie et magiciens dans l'Égypte ancienne*.

¹⁰⁴ Survives in Akkadian *hartibi* (=āšipu ‘magician priest’), and Hebrew *Hartummim* in the Old Testament as a designation for pharaoh’s magicians; cf. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 220-30. For *xartibi*, see E. Edel, *Ägyptische Ärzte und ägyptische Medizin am hethitischen Königshof. Neue Funde von Keilschriftbriefen Ramses' II. aus Boğazköy*, 53-63, and 68-9.

¹⁰⁵ Corresponding to *sm/stm*, exclusively held by the high priests of Ptah. For a comprehensive study of the title and its functions, see e.g., C. Maystre, *Les grands prêtres de Ptah de Memphis*.

¹⁰⁶ Various interpretations: ‘full time priest.’ H. Kees, “Zur Organisation des Ptahtempels in Karnak und seiner Priesterschaft,” *MIO* 3, (1955): 336-7. Class of “pure priests.” A. H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, 52. For a discussion on the title and the priest’s domain in the temple, see e.g. J. Gee, “Prophets, Initiation and the Egyptian Temple,” *JSSEA* 31, (2004): 79-107.

¹⁰⁷ cf. Maystre, *Les grands prêtres de Ptah de Memphis*.

hold the title “chief lector priest,” i.e. a direct designation with the title “magician,” while most Demotic stories had a tradition where the religious affiliation to the temple was sufficient to designate an association with esoteric knowledge. Here, two literary groups of priests were favored according to their geographic attachment: the Memphite priesthood, e.g., Khamwase, and the Heliopolitan priesthood, e.g., Petese.¹⁰⁸ Their titles are mostly “high priest” for the former group and “god’s servant” for the latter, but “chief lector priest” also occurs with less attestations. As discussed above, narrative fiction focuses on the magical skills of the priest, which he uses to influence his surroundings.

As the title “he who carries the festival scroll” suggests, the magician was an authority with regards to “magic” (*hk3*) in its written and spoken form as well as in its performative aspects as implied by “festival.” The magic in its own right was conceived as the “word(s) of god” (*mdw ntr*)¹⁰⁹ and therefore, effectuating the magic happens through the recitation of the sacred words. The relationship between the spoken and written spell is thus observed in the link between Thoth, the god of writing, and magic,¹¹⁰ as he is qualified as “excellent of magic” (*mnḥ hk3*) in his capacity of “Lord of hieroglyphs” (*nb mdw ntr*).¹¹¹ In the same fashion, a link between the magician and Thoth is observed in fictional narratives. One example is the Middle Egyptian story of *Khufu’s Court* (MK),¹¹² where Djedi is said to know the whereabouts of the shrines of the sanctuary of Thoth (*ip.t n.t Dḥw.ty*: 9, 4), information, which king Khufu himself did not have. Another parallel motif is described in *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah*¹¹³ where the magicians Naneferkaptah and Khamwase contest to possess the magic Book of Thoth that gave its owner power over the universe. Naneferkaptah absorbs the magical powers written on the scroll by dissolving its writing in water and drinking it (4, 3-4). As he drinks the spells in liquid form, he immediately realizes (*rh*) all that is in it, i.e. he gains its powers. These two motifs present the magician priest as a possessor of exclusive powers that allow him to access secret information. This is further implied by the fact that both objects in the two examples are well hidden

¹⁰⁸ Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 225-6.

¹⁰⁹ Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 35 including note 160.

¹¹⁰ For the relation of Thoth to magic, see e.g., P. Boylan, *Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt: A Study of some Aspects of Theological Thought in Ancient Egypt*, 124-35.

¹¹¹ pBM 10188: 33, 17-18: R. O. Faulkner, *The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind* (British Museum no. 10188), 93; R. O. Faulkner, “The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus: IV,” *JEA* 24, (1938): 53. See also: Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 35ff.

¹¹² Text editions: A. Erman, *Die Märchen des Papyrus Westcar*; A. M. Blackman, *The Story of King Kheops and the Magicians. Transcribed from Papyrus Westcar* (Berlin Papyrus 3033); V. M. Lepper, *Untersuchungen zu pWestcar: eine philologische und literaturwissenschaftliche (Neu)-Analyse*. Recent translation in: W. K. Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 13-24. For date of composition see (2.4.1).

¹¹³ F. L. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis: The Sethon of Herodotus and the Demotic Tales of Khamuas*, vol. 1: 82-141. Recent edition: S. Goldbrunner, *Der verblendete Gelehrte. Der erste Setna-Roman* (P. Kairo 30646). Recent translation: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 453-69. Date of manuscript: early Ptolemaic Period, see (2.5.1).

and unattainable by any “ordinary” person: even king Khufu himself had, to no avail, attempted to gain information about Thoth’s shrines, while the magic Book of Thoth in the Khamwase story was hidden in:

the midst of the sea of Coptos within a chest of iron, with the chest of iron within a chest [of bronze, with the chest of] bronze within a chest of Aleppo pinewood, with the chest of Aleppo pinewood within a chest of ivory and ebony, with the chest of ivory and ebony within a [chest of silver, with the chest of] silver within a chest of gold, with the scroll within it, with one [schoinos]of snakes, scorpions, and all manner of reptiles about the perimeter of the chest in which the scroll is, and with [an eternal snake about the perimeter] of this same chest.¹¹⁴

The motif of this chest hidden in the sea with the magical book within it further echoes a practice of ascribing discoveries of manuscripts in well-hidden places, which is noted above. One further example is the story of *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah*. Here, Naneferkaptah had hidden Thoth’s Book in his own tomb where Khamwase subsequently discovered it. This scene is paralleled in the abovementioned spell 167-69 of the *Book of the Dead*, which accredits Khamwase with its discovery amongst ancient magical texts beneath the head of an entombed mummy.¹¹⁵ The magician is thus ascribed a role in these narratives as the explorer of secret script and knowledge, which ordinary individuals, as well as the king, would fail to acquire.

Literary motifs of the magician and his equipment are further paralleled by the Ramesseum find from the Middle Kingdom.¹¹⁶ The find was discovered in a disturbed context beneath the storerooms of the Ramesseum and consists of a box measuring 45x30cm, which was surrounded by various scattered objects. The box contained 23 fragmentary papyri, and Ritner notes that the label on the box itself, which is a jackal on top of a box, may be read as the hieroglyphic sign for the title *hry sst3* “master of secrets” (*Wb.* 298-99), a designation of the officials who had access to the cultic secrets that was presumably among the titles held by the box owner.¹¹⁷ The items surrounding the box included a bundle of reed pens, female fertility figurines, faience animals, ivory figures, a bronze serpent entangled in a mass of hair and a Beset figurine (a naked woman with a partly animal head holding a serpent) as

¹¹⁴ 3, 18-20. This translation in: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 456-7.

¹¹⁵ See note 98.

¹¹⁶ Tomb: J. E. Quibell, *The Ramesseum*, 3-4, pls. 2-3. For a discussion and contextualization of the objects as magician’s tool, cf. R. B. Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among other Histories*, 138-60.

¹¹⁷ Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 231. On *hry sst3*, see also e.g. S. Z. Balanda, "The title Hry-sStA to the end of the New Kingdom," *JARCE* 45, (2009): 319-48; T. DuQuesne, "Anubis Master of Secrets (Hry-sStA) and the Egyptian Conception of Mysteries," *DE* 36, (1996): 25-8. The former focuses on the term until the New Kingdom and the latter discusses the concept within a mystical context (including Greco-Roman period) and provides references to Anubis and his role in Egyptian religion.

well as several other objects, such as a naked dwarf carrying a calf, fragments of four magical wands, and clappers.

While the objects surrounding the box may be labeled as typical for Middle Kingdom burial equipment that protect the tomb and its owner,¹¹⁸ their function need not have been strictly funerary, especially when considering the nature of the papyri in the box and the distinctiveness of some of the objects such as the Beset figure and the serpent.

The manuscripts¹¹⁹ in the box contained texts for various ceremonial and protective purposes. Among the ceremonial manuscripts was a text for a festival ritual,¹²⁰ a funerary liturgy for ceremonies at a mastaba,¹²¹ and a cycle of hymns to the crocodile god Sobek.¹²² The protective texts were magico-medical manuscripts,¹²³ including texts for safeguarding mother and child,¹²⁴ for protecting a house from magic, and for protecting the epagomenal days at the turn of the year. Other texts guarded people from ghosts, serpents,¹²⁵ and several afflictions such as fever, stiffness and evil dreams.¹²⁶ The manuscripts also included what might be love spells,¹²⁷ magical/religious texts,¹²⁸ and prescriptions.¹²⁹ Only a small part of the manuscripts were literary texts. One manuscript contained *The Discourse of Sasobek*,¹³⁰ another an unidentified composition,¹³¹ while other texts included an onomasticon,¹³² and a roll with the story of *The Eloquent Peasant* and the *Story of Sinuhe*.¹³³ Another small fragment of wisdom

¹¹⁸ For Middle Kingdom burial customs, see for example: H. Willems, ed. *Social Aspects of Funerary Culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms*. Also J. E. Richards, *Society and Death in Ancient Egypt: Mortuary Landscapes of the Middle Kingdom*, 143.

¹¹⁹ The manuscripts here presented are discussed in detail in: Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among other Histories*, 146ff.

¹²⁰ pRamesseum B: J. F. Quack, "Zur Lesung und Deutung des Dramatischen Ramesseumpapyrus," *ZÄS* 133, (2006): 72-89.

¹²¹ pRamesseum E: A. H. Gardiner, *The Ramesseum Papyri*, 7-19; W. Helck, "Papyrus Ramesseum E," *SAK*, (1981): 151-66; N. Alexanian, "Ritualrelikte an Mastabagräbern des Alten Reiches," In *Stationen: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Ägyptens, Reiner Stadelmann gewidmet*, 3-22.

¹²² pRamesseum 6: A. H. Gardiner, "Hymns to Sobk in a Ramesseum Papyrus," *RdE* 11, (1957): 43-56.

¹²³ Several texts are unpublished (pRamesseum 7, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17 and C+18), cf. Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among other Histories*, 146-7.

¹²⁴ pRamesseum 3: W. Westendorf, *Handbuch der altägyptischen Medizin I*, 11-15; R.-A. Jean and A.-M. Loyrette, "À propos des textes médicaux des papyrus du Ramesseum no III et IV. I: la contraception," *Memnonia* 12/13, (2001-2002): 83-115; R.-A. Jean and A.-M. Loyrette, "À propos des textes médicaux des papyrus du Ramesseum nos III et IV. II: la gynécologie," *Memnonia* 15, (2004): 67-91.

¹²⁵ A Late Period copy is also found of a spell against serpents. Noted by: Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among other Histories*, 146. Late Period version: H. Altenmüller, "Ein Zauberspruch zum 'Schutz des Leibes'," *GM* 33, (1979): 7-12.

¹²⁶ pRamsseum 7, cf.: Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among other Histories*, 146.

¹²⁷ pRamsseum 11: G. Posener, "La légende de la tresse d'Hathor," In *Egyptological Studies in Honor of Richard A. Parker presented on the Occasion of his 78th Birthday December 10, 1983*, 111-17.

¹²⁸ pRamsseum 19: Westendorf, *Handbuch der altägyptischen Medizin I*, 6-9.

¹²⁹ pRamesseum 5: J. W. B. Barns, *Five Ramesseum Papyri*, 1-10, pls. 1-6.

¹³⁰ pRamsseum 1: J. W. B. Barns, *Five Ramesseum Papyri*, 11-14, pls. 7-9.

¹³¹ pRamsseum 2: *ibid.*; Quirke, *Egyptian Literature 1800 BC: Questions and Readings*, 187-9.

¹³² pRamsseum D: Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, 6-3: pls. 1-6.

¹³³ pRamsseum A: cf. Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among other Histories*, 147.

text, which is apparently distinct from any other manuscript,¹³⁴ was also among these manuscripts. The Ramesseum find, as a whole, confirms the image of the priest in narrative literature through the history of Egypt as an intellectual expert in text and ritual.

Several scholars agree that the Ramesseum find had specifically belonged to a lector priest, which is further supported by the mention of this title¹³⁵ as the person who performs the magic in two of the liturgical papyri. The connection between the objects and the texts is also noticeable as one spell against snakebites states that it should be recited above a serpent, presumably as the serpent figurine that was found next to the box.¹³⁶ The objects surrounding the box (wands, clappers, etc.) and the fact that most of the texts concern healing and protection, together further confirm a context of magical practice.¹³⁷ For example, the magic wands were usually used to protect infants from daemons,¹³⁸ while the figure of the Beset would have been used to protect women in childbirth. Further evidence that suggests that the items were magical equipment is their apparent wear. For instance, the serpent and wands were worn thin: the serpent is now broken at the point where it would have been held,¹³⁹ while some of the wands had been repaired and then cut down and reshaped after further wear.¹⁴⁰ The hair entangling the serpent might be seen as a personal relic to strengthen a charm in an apotropaic ritual,¹⁴¹ and the figure of the dwarf carrying a calf is likely to be an item associated with water spells, which protect people crossing the Nile.¹⁴²

The Ramesseum find is comparable in its contents to descriptions of magicians' instruments referred to in narrative text. For example, in the story of *Khufu's Court* where the magician Djedi, brings his "writings" (*sh3.w*) with him to court where he is to perform his magic before the king (8, 4). An additional example also occurs in *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* where Khamwase is provided with his "amulets of Ptah, his father" and his "scrolls of magic" (*dmꜥ.w n t3y-iwyt*, lit. scrolls of taking security) when he is to engage in a magic duel with his opponent (4, 32).¹⁴³ These objects and categories of magical texts would have been similar to those of the Ramesseum find containing spells and

¹³⁴ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 310-11.

¹³⁵ Quack, "Zur Lesung und Deutung des Dramatischen Ramesseumpapyrus," 72-89; Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 206; Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among other Histories*, 157.

¹³⁶ Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among other Histories*, 157.

¹³⁷ Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among other Histories*, 159.

¹³⁸ H. Altenmüller, "Ein Zaubermesser des Mittleren Reiches," *SAK* 13, (1986): 1-27; Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 224ff.

¹³⁹ R. K. Ritner, "'And Each Staff Transformed into a Snake': The Serpent Wand in Ancient Egypt," In *Through a Glass Darkly: Magic, Dreams, and Prophecy in Ancient Egypt*, 207, n. 16.

¹⁴⁰ Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among other Histories*, 145.

¹⁴¹ Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 161, 210 and 225.

¹⁴² Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 225-31.

¹⁴³ R. K. Ritner, "Setna's Spell of Taking Security (Setna I, col. IV/31-34)," In *Honi soit qui mal y pense: Studien zum pharaonischen, griechisch-römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Ehren von Heinz-Josef Thissen*, 425-8.

instructions for the magician's use. This image of the magician equipped with his scrolls and sacred objects remained intact for over 2000 years.

Other parallels between the Ramesseum find and narrative texts are the magic figurines. Such models that represent real beings are attested in magical practices throughout Egyptian history.¹⁴⁴ The figures are mentioned in magical texts and in the funerary literature, representing gods, animals and human beings. In narrative texts, the most frequently mentioned motif in this context is the manufacture of wax figurines, which come to life and assist the magician.¹⁴⁵ Such figures are generally created in whatever form is desired by the magician, and a spell is then recited over them to bring them to life and enable them to execute the magician's orders. This subject occurs, significantly, in literature from all periods of Egyptian history. The earliest story that utilizes the motif is *Khufu's Court* where a magician named Ubainer creates a crocodile from wax and recites a spell over it with the instruction to eat his wife's lover. He then orders a servant to cast the figure into a lake when the lover appears at the shore where it comes to life as a full-sized crocodile, and carries out its instructions (2, 21ff.). The episode, loaded with symbolism and wordplay,¹⁴⁶ is central to the narrative providing the protagonist with the means to avenge himself on his rival and constitutes the key 'marvel' (*bi3*) of the first story in the narrative.

Due to the nature of the spell casting, not many figures have actually survived in the archeological records. Many of the figures, especially those intended for destructive purposes, were ruined during the ritual. However, some examples may be mentioned of how wax figures were employed in practice including the New Kingdom records of the conspiracy against Ramses III (c. 1184-1153 BC).¹⁴⁷ The texts explain that wax figures of both men and gods had been manufactured by

¹⁴⁴ The practice remained in use even in Islamic Egypt. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 111ff. provides a comprehensive overview of the objects and their use. Literary magic motifs and cultural practice in Pharaonic, Coptic and Islamic Egypt are discussed in: R. Salim, "Cultural Memory and Motifs of Magician Heroes from Ancient to Islamic Egypt," (forthcoming).

¹⁴⁵ For a comprehensive study of wax use in magic, see: M. J. Raven, "Wax in Egyptian Magic and Symbolism," *OMRO* 64, (1983): 7-47. The article includes the Demotic stories *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* and *Khamwase and Siosiris*. Wax in the magician stories further occurs in: *Khufu's Court* (3/4 ff. Middle Egyptian); *The Story of Petese* (3/14, 3/15, 5/8, Demotic); *Djoser and Imhotep* (unpublished); preliminary remarks: K. Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A Survey of the Narrative Source Material," In *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, 501. Another Demotic unpublished story about Horus son of Pwensh also includes this motif: K. Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 14.

¹⁴⁶ On the symbolism and word-play of the passage, see: C. Eyre, "Yet again the Wax Crocodile: P. Westcar 3, 12 ff," *JEA* 78, (1992): 280-1. On the symbolism of the crocodile and its association with fate and punishment, see also: C. Eyre, "Fate, Crocodiles and the Judgement of the Dead. Some Mythological Allusions in Egyptian Literature," *SAK* 4, (1976): 103-14.

¹⁴⁷ *KRI*, V, 360-6 (=pLee, pRollin, pRifaud and Turin Judicial papyri): T. Déveria, "Le papyrus judiciaire de Turin," *JA* 6, (1865): 227-61 and 331-77; T. Déveria, "Le papyrus judiciaire de Turin," *JA* 6, (1866): 154-95; T. Déveria, "Le papyrus judiciaire de Turin," *JA* 6, (1867): 402-76; W. Pleyte, *Les Papyrus Rollin de la Bibliothèque Impériale de Paris*. Discussions ; e.g., S. Sauneron and J. Yoyotte, "Le texte hiératique Rifaud," *BIFAO* 50, (1952): 107-17; H.

the conspirators intending to affect the power of the king's personnel and weaken their limbs (pRollin, 1; pLee col. 1, line 4), presumably as a complement to more physical and political actions. As in the literary texts, wax figures employed by magicians could be used for both good and bad, depending on the inclination of the creator of the figures. The endurance of the motif in literature is matched by the continued use of such images in magical practice. A literary example from the first century AD is *Khamwase and Sisoris*.¹⁴⁸ Here a Nubian magician creates four footmen and a palanquin of wax, brings them to life and sends them to Egypt to bring its king to Nubia where he is beaten with 500 whip blows on his buttocks before the Nubian Chieftain (4, 19-21). This humiliation is retaliated by the Egyptian magician Horus son of Pwensh who, in the same manner, humiliates the Nubian king in Egypt, i.e. public humiliation involving 500 blows with a whip. The episode reflects the traditional hostility towards Nubia and its magicians, attested throughout Egyptian history. For example, in Amenhotep II's (c. 1427-1400 BC) warning more than 1500 years earlier "Don't be at all lenient with Nubians! Beware of their people and their sorcerers"¹⁴⁹ and in the archeological evidence from the 12th dynasty Mergissa deposit, which is located adjacent to the second cataract fortress in southern Egypt.¹⁵⁰ This deposit formed part of an official consecration act where several items symbolizing the Nubian enemies were destroyed into a pit. Accordingly, the consecration act would safeguard the fortress against the Nubians and enforce the effect of the monument. The items, over 800 fragments, included broken inscribed vases and jars, mixed figurines, including figures of bound prisoners representing Nubians. The texts on the vessels and figures all relate to protecting Egypt from its enemies.¹⁵¹ Some texts mention specific Nubian people such as "the prince of Kush NN" or "rebels", "warriors", and any endangering entity against Egypt.¹⁵² All the objects with the inscriptions were smashed into the pit to symbolize the elimination of the threat.¹⁵³ In the Khamwase motif mentioned above, the Nubian

Goedicke, "Was Magic Used in the Harem Conspiracy Against Ramses II? (P. Rollin and P. Lee)," *JEA* 49, (1963): 71-92; Y. Koenig, "Nouveaux textes Rifaud II (document E)," *CRIPEL* 11, (1989): 53-8.

¹⁴⁸ Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis: The Sethon of Herodotus and the Demotic Tales of Khamuas*, vol. 1: 142-207. Recent translation: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 470-89.

¹⁴⁹ BMFA Stele 25.632: W. Helck, "Eine Stele des Vizekönigs Wsr-St.t," *JNES* 14, (1955): 22-31. Translation in: E. Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 27-8.

¹⁵⁰ cf. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 140-41 and 151-73.

¹⁵¹ A. Vila, "Un depot de textes d'envoûtement au Moyen Empire," *Journal des Savants*, (1963): 135-60; A. Vila, "Un rituel d'envoûtement au Moyen Empire égyptien," In *L'homme hier et aujourd'hui. Recueil d'études en hommage à André Leroi-Gourhan*, 301-12; G. Posener, "Les textes d'envoûtement de Mirgissa," *Syria* 43, (1966): 277-87; Y. Koenig, "Les textes d'envoûtement de Mirgissa," *RdE* 41, (1990): 101-25.

¹⁵² Vila, "Un rituel d'envoûtement au Moyen Empire égyptien," In *L'homme hier et aujourd'hui. Recueil d'études en hommage à André Leroi-Gourhan*, 632-3 (fig. 1).

¹⁵³ The practice is attested throughout Egyptian history. For a general listing, see: *LÄ*, I, 67-9; G. Posener, *Cinq figurines d'envoûtement*, 2-6. Further references are added in: Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 137, note 611. For Old Kingdom: A. M. Abu Bakr and J. Osing, "Ächtungstexte aus dem Alten Reich," *MDAIK* 29, (1973): 97-133.

chieftain and his sorcerer symbolize the same elements represented by the figurines in the Mirgissa deposit. In this context, 2000 years after the date of the Mirgissa rituals, Nubians are still being symbolically eliminated in narrative motifs.

This aspect of magic as a means of defeating enemies of Egypt becomes an essential motif in narrative literature in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt. Aside from the Khamwase story mentioned above concerning the Nubian sorcerer, the theme is also found in the story of king *Djoser and Imhotep* (2nd century AD, discussed below). Here the magician Imhotep accompanies the king in a campaign where, in an encounter against the Assyrian army, the magician singlehandedly defeats an Assyrian sorceress dispatched by the enemy king to destroy the Egyptian forces. Imhotep and the Assyrian magician then engage in a magic duel against each other in which figures are created and brought to life. Every being sent against the Egyptian army is destroyed by the beings that Imhotep creates and the Assyrian sorceress fails to defeat Imhotep. The roles of Imhotep and Horus son of Pwensh in these two stories are analogous in that both are essential forces for Egypt to defeat her enemies.

The same use of magical wax figures also found its way into several episodes of the *Alexander Romance*. Here the alleged father of Alexander the Great, the historical king Nectanebo II (360-343 BC), the last native king of Egypt, is said to have won battles against the Persians through the utilization of magical wax figures. The magician king would place wax enemies in a bowl of water and recite spells upon them, the figures would then sink to the bottom of the bowl, causing at the same moment the destruction of the live soldiers. If the enemies were coming by sea, Nectanebo would place the wax soldiers in wax boats and recite his spells, causing the ships to sink into the sea at the same time.¹⁵⁴

Thus magical practice was transferred into narrative tradition where it plays an essential role for preserving Egypt's superiority towards its enemies and protecting its king. The magician's role in this context is being the sole expert in the utilization of "gods words" that effectuate the magic. The magician is associated indirectly with Thoth by virtue of his knowledge of scripture. He is thus depicted in literary motifs utilizing this knowledge, for example, as he utters his words of magic upon wax figurines, or when he is portrayed with his books of magic spells.

¹⁵⁴ e.g.: E. A. W. Budge, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great being a Series of Translations of the Ethiopic History of Alexander by the Pseudo-Callisthenes and other Writers*, x-xi and 391; R. Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend*, 13-16.

(2.4) Magicians in Middle and Late Egyptian literary memory

Only three manuscripts from the Middle and New Kingdoms are substantial enough in contents to analyze. The magicians in these stories are discussed in the beginning of this paragraph. The discussion then moves on to magicians in narratives from Greco-Roman Egypt. As already mentioned, these periods witness an increased number of preserved narratives featuring magicians.¹⁵⁵ This circumstance goes hand in hand with the existence of narratives about the exploits of great warriors from the Saite period (7th century BC).¹⁵⁶ Common for both genres is a historical setting where Egypt was still ruled by an indigenous pharaoh. The warrior narratives are set in the Saite period, the last historical period with native rule, while magician stories of Greco-Roman Egypt have varied historical settings ranging from the Old Kingdom to the Saite Period. This circumstance is a reaction to the extensive and traumatic exposure to foreign rule that provokes the need for national heroes; cultural heroes (priests) and martial heroes (warriors). While warrior stories form a genre of fiction that is not attested in Middle and Late Egyptian narratives, stories about magicians, on the other hand, have a long tradition in Egyptian narratives. As already stated, the extant manuscripts expose two favored priestly settings for the Demotic magician stories: the high priests of Ptah in Memphis, and the priesthood of Atum-Ra in Heliopolis. Many of these stories survive in several versions from different parts of Egypt; from the Hellenistic to the Roman period, suggesting an enduring popularity amongst its audience. Only a few Demotic stories about Imhotep survive from the Roman period (none are published yet), which may be due to the accidents of preservation rather than a reflection on the degree of its popularity. The following sections first present the literary tradition on Imhotep since material about him survives throughout Egyptian history. I then proceed with magician heroes of the surviving narrative fiction in a chronological order.

(2.4.1) Imhotep

The story of *Khufu's Court* is the earliest extant narrative with magicians as hero figures.¹⁵⁷ The manuscript dates to the New Kingdom (c. between 1650-1550 BC) while the language of the text suggests a date of composition that is no earlier than the 12th dynasty of the Middle Kingdom (c. 1985-1773 BC).¹⁵⁸ The frame story of this narrative is set in the reign of king Khufu (Greek Cheops, c. 2589

¹⁵⁵ Section (2.2) discussed portrayals of the kings in this story.

¹⁵⁶ This aspect of literature forms the main subject of chapter (4)

¹⁵⁷ The theme of the text as presenting a literary contrast between the old line of kings (3rd- 4th dynasty) and the new line (5th dynasty) is discussed in detail in (3.4). For references, see note 112.

¹⁵⁸ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 295-7.

BC) of the 4th Dynasty (Old Kingdom: c. 2589-2566 BC). Here the king is told four stories by four of his sons, each story in memory of a magician from the past.

The first three magicians are Imhotep (probably), Ubainer, and Djadjaemankh respectively, and their stories are set in the reigns of king Khufu's predecessors Djoser, Nebka, and Sneferu. The fourth magician is Djedi and his story takes place during Khufu's own lifetime.¹⁵⁹ The hypothesis that the first story in this narrative concerns Imhotep is based on the fact that it is set in the reign of king Djoser¹⁶⁰ under whom Imhotep in fact was a high official. However, the entire plot is lost and only the last part of the story survives, which mentions king Khufu offering to king Djoser. Another narrative, which is set in the reign of Djoser is the Demotic story of king *Djoser and Imhotep* from the 2nd century AD. Thus *Khufu's Court* would be the earliest surviving literary reference that commemorates Imhotep as a skilled magician.

From a historical perspective, not much is known about Imhotep except for what remains of a single contemporary inscription,¹⁶¹ which records his name and titles revealing that he served under the reign of Djoser (c. 2600 BC). Aside from this inscription, all the remaining archeological material concerning Imhotep is of a later date.

As a powerful magician, Imhotep is cited in the New Kingdom pChester Beatty IV,¹⁶² which also accredits him the authorship of a yet unidentified work.¹⁶³ From around the same period, pAthens National Library 1826, presumably from Deir el Medina¹⁶⁴ (discussed below), describes him as an "able spirit" (*3h ikr*), and eminent official (*sr ʿ3*), where he is depicted among other magicians whose magic is said to protect all living beings. By the Saite Period, Imhotep had become deified as the son of the god

¹⁵⁹ Djedi is not described as a "magician" but as a *nds* "commoner" *Wb.* 384-5. Apart from the present narrative the term is also used in the *Prophecy of Neferti*, where Neferti is described as a *nds* who is "strong of his arm" (*kn n g3bt=f*) and in the *Tale of Nefer*[...] about a certain Nefer[...] who also was a *nds kn [n g3bt=f]*: Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 302. Interpretations of the term vary from "free citizen" to an attribute of being "young" "strong" and "(battle)-capable." The term is not attested in other Late Egyptian or Demotic fictional narratives as a designation for a character with magical skills. For "free citizen" cf. A. Loprieno, "Loyalty to the King, to God, to Oneself," In *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, 545ff. For "young, strong" cf. D. Franke, "Kleiner Mann (nDs) - was bist Du?," *GM* 167, (1998): 33-48. See also note 102 on Djedi's affiliation with magic and secret knowledge.

¹⁶⁰ K. Ryholt, "The Life of Imhotep," In *Actes du IXe congrès international des études démotiques. Paris, 31 août - 3 septembre 2005*, 306; Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 182.

¹⁶¹ For the historical Imhotep, see: D. Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep. Gottwerdung im alten Ägypten*, especially pp. 5-245. See also review of For additional references: A. von Lieven, "Vom Baumeister zum Gott: Die posthume Karriere des Imhotep," *Sokar* 9, (2004): 4-8.

¹⁶² =pBM 10684: A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Third Series: Chester Beatty Gift*, 38-44, pl. 18-19.

¹⁶³ cf. Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 30-2.

¹⁶⁴ H-W. Fischer-Elfert, "Quelques textes et une vignette du papyrus magique n° 1826 de la Bibliothèque nationale d'Athènes," In *La magie en Égypte: à la recherche d'une définition; actes du colloque organisé par le Musée du Louvre les 29 et 30 septembre 2000*, 167-84; H-W. Fischer-Elfert, "Representations of the Past in New Kingdom Literature," In *Never Had the Like Occured: Egypt's View of its Past*, 128-9.

Ptah having his own chapel at Memphis as a healing god. This veneration spread throughout Egypt and to most of Nubia and by the Hellenistic and Roman periods Imhotep became associated with healing and medicine and identified by the Greeks with Asclepius, the god of medicine.¹⁶⁵ From this period many bronze figurines have survived showing him as a seated, shaven-headed priest who holds an unrolled papyrus on his knees as the symbol of his wisdom and knowledge. The historian Manetho credits him with devising the construction of the step pyramid of king Djoser, and he also became associated with astrology in texts from the Tebtunis temple library from the 2nd century AD. Here Imhotep is identified as a ‘magician’ (*hry tb*) and sage (*rh ht*) and credited the authorship of several astrological manuals. On one dedicated hymn, his skills are praised as an astrologer who is “the one who lets be known the movement of the stars.”¹⁶⁶

Another testimony to Imhotep is in one of the *Harper's Songs* recorded on pHarris 500 (New Kingdom).¹⁶⁷ These songs, which were sung at mortuary banquets,¹⁶⁸ are recorded on many tomb walls of the New Kingdom and revolve around the themes of life and death: the sorrow associated with death, and the advice to enjoy the life of the present. The text of pHarris 500 itself, the language of which is Middle Egyptian, claims to be from the tomb of a King Intef,¹⁶⁹ and an incomplete copy of it was also found inscribed in a private tomb at Saqqara from around the 14th century BC.¹⁷⁰ The verses describe Imhotep as a recognized sage, through the survival of his words, presumably a reference to texts, but claims that all physical remains of his tomb are lost, as is if he had never existed:

*I have heard the words of Imhotep and Hardedef, whose sayings are repeated intact . But what of their places? Their walls are in ruins, and their places are no more, as if they had never existed.*¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ In general cf. Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep. Gottwerdung im alten Ägypten*, 139; D. Wildung, *Egyptian Saints: Deification in Pharaonic Egypt*, 55.

¹⁶⁶ Ryholt, "The Life of Imhotep," In *Actes du IXe congrès international des études démotiques. Paris, 31 août - 3 septembre 2005*, 313, and note 30.

¹⁶⁷ E. A. W. Budge, *Facsimiles of Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, Second Series*, pls. 45-6; W. M. Müller, *Die Liebespoesie der alten Ägypter*, 14-28, pls. 2-15. Recent Translation in: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 308-19.

¹⁶⁸ Several studies are devoted to this type of literature, see e.g.: M. V. Fox, "The Entertainment Song Genre in Egyptian Literature," In *Egyptological Studies*, 268-316, with a comprehensive bibliography.

¹⁶⁹ "The song, which is in the house of Intef true of voice, which is before the harper" (2, 6-3). Several rulers were named Intef in the 11th and 17th dynasties and the identity of this king is a subject of discussion, cf. D. Polz, "The Pyramid Complex of Nubkheperre Intef," *EA* 22, (2003): 12-15; M. V. Fox, "A Study of Antef," *Orientalia* 46, (1977): 393-423. See also: H. Goedicke, "The Date of the 'Antef-Song'," In *Fragen an die altägyptische Literatur: Studien zum Gedenken an Eberhard Otto*, 185-96. The author rejects a post Amarna date for the text. He reads the introduction as "A song which is in the house of one who is carried away" with *in.tw.f* as the epithet for the deceased instead of the name Antef; the cartouche and the following *m3ꜥ-hrw* as the first word of the song proper, and *hsw m bint* as "the singer in misery."

¹⁷⁰ Fox, "A Study of Antef," 393-423.

¹⁷¹ 6, 6-8: Translation: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 332.

This coupling of Imhotep and Hordjedef,¹⁷² who was another famous sage accredited authorship of a wisdom text,¹⁷³ is also explicit in pChester Beatty IV where literary testimony is established for the two sages: "Is there any here like Hordjedef? Is there another like Imhotep? (...) Those sages who foretold the future, that which came forth from their mouths took place (...) They are gone, their names are forgotten. But writings cause them to be remembered."¹⁷⁴

Other attestation of the Imhotep and Hordjedef motif are pAthens National Library 1826 (see below), which describes them as eminent sages in a drawing accompanying a spell, and the story of *Khufu's Court* itself where Hordjedef is the one who relates to king Khufu the fourth story of magician's marvels. In a remarkable and analogous context, a text from the Tebtunis temple library preserves part of a colophon, which attributes the discovery of the text to Imhotep. The motif repeats that of texts being discovered by skilled magicians: the text which "Imhotep, son of Ptah, found in a box of copper, it (i.e. the text) being an enigma." Ryholt notes that the signs before the name of Imhotep would seem to read [hr]-tt=f (i.e. Hordjedef) in which case the discovery of the text would have been attributed jointly to these two sages.¹⁷⁵ The Tebtunis texts would thus be pairing Hordjedef and Imhotep several millennia after the earliest attestations, which is an indication of a conscious effort to preserve traditional literary motifs.

All the sources discussed so far attest to the longevity of the traditions concerning Imhotep, including his paring with Hordjedef and king Djoser, attested even in the Roman period. In the narrative of *Djoser and Imhotep*, the latter accompanies the king on a campaign to retrieve sacred objects that were removed from the country during foreign occupation, back to Egypt. In the story, Imhotep plays a main role in defeating the Assyrians through his magical skills.¹⁷⁶ In this context, *Khufu's Court* may be positioned in Egyptian literary tradition as the earliest fictional narrative about Imhotep, making

¹⁷² For the reception of Hordjedef in the Egyptian tradition of magical practice see, e.g. J. von Beckerath, "Der weise Djedefhor in spätägyptischer Überlieferung," In *Lingua restituta orientalis. Festgabe für Julius Assfalg*, 17-20.

¹⁷³ *Instruction of Hordjedef*: The beginning is preserved on several ostraca of the Ramesside period. The text with its various copies has been treated in W. Helck, *Die Lehre des Djedefhor und die Lehre eines Vaters an seinen Sohn*.

¹⁷⁴ Following translation in: A. H. Gardiner, "The Instruction Addressed to Kagemni and his Brethren," *JEA* 32, (1946): 71-4. See also: G. Moers, "Zur Relevanz der Namensliste des pChester Beatty IV für Versuche einer funktionalen Binnendifferenzierung des gemeinhin als 'literarisch' bezeichneten Gattungssystems des Mittleren Reiches," In *Miscellanea in honorem Wolfhart Westendorf*, 45-52. The author distinguishes (at least) two categories of popular New Kingdom literature, didactic and narrative where the list in the text would be restricted to works within the didactic category.

¹⁷⁵ Ryholt, "The Life of Imhotep," In *Actes du IXe congrès international des études démotiques. Paris, 31 août - 3 septembre 2005*, 313, note 30.

¹⁷⁶ Ryholt, "The Life of Imhotep," In *Actes du IXe congrès international des études démotiques. Paris, 31 août - 3 septembre 2005*, 306. Preliminary remarks in the aforementioned article, and Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A Survey of the Narrative Source Material," In *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, 500-2.

him the magician whose reputation survived the longest in Egyptian cultural memory, a popularity that lasted more than three thousand years after his death.

The Provenance of *Djoser and Imhotep* is the Tebtunis temple library from which derive narratives that commemorate historical figures of the past in fictional plots. Ryholt labels these narratives as *historical* in the sense that the narratives served as historical sources relating the Egyptian perception of their own past.¹⁷⁷ Thus these texts may be perceived as tools of forming an identity after many centuries of foreign occupation. Among these stories is the Cycle of Inaros named after a prince from Athribis in the delta who revolted in the 7th century BC against the Assyrian invasion (see §(4). In reality, the revolt was not successful, but in the story the prince is described as the one who liberated Egypt from the Assyrians through his mighty warrior skills. The story about Imhotep and Djoser places Imhotep as a highly regarded historical figure who also played a prominent political role as that of Inaros, albeit through his magical power.

In the story, he secures the victory of the Egyptian army against the Assyrians when he sets out with the king to retrieve the divine images that had been robbed from Egypt. In this context, his presence is very significant in the narrative, since it is he who singlehandedly, in a magical duel, defeats the skilled sorceress sent by the Assyrian king against Djoser's army. To begin with, the Assyrian sorceress creates an image of Geb upon which she casts her spells causing it to live and join the Assyrians in the battlefield. Imhotep counters her move by creating an image of Nut, which is similarly given life and joins the Egyptian army. The Assyrian sorceress then creates further magical images, but each is countered by Imhotep, including a giant snake that he neutralizes and a magical fire which he quenches.¹⁷⁸

Imhotep's role in the story of *Djoser and Imhotep* is analogous to the role of Horus son of Pwensh in *Khamwase and Siosiris* (see below). Both magicians play a major part in eliminating a threat against Egypt and its kings. In the former, Imhotep defeats the Assyrians, while in the latter Horus son of Pwensh defeats the Nubians who, in the form of a skilled Nubian sorcerer, had threatened Egypt and the life of its king. In the final scene of *Khamwase and Siosiris*, the magical duel takes place at the royal court between the Egyptian magician and the Nubian one. First, the Nubian makes a spell that causes a fire to break out in the court, but Horus son of Pwensh recites a formula causing the sky to make an "Upper Egyptian rainstorm" above the fire that quenches it. Then the Nubian makes several attempts

¹⁷⁷ K. Ryholt, "Egyptian Historical Literature from the Greco-Roman Period," In *Das Ereignis: Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Vorfall und Befund*. Ryholt discusses Egyptian historical literature from the Greco-Roman period in relation to the three periods of national trauma, namely the Hyksos era, the Amarna age, and the Assyrian domination of Egypt.

¹⁷⁸ Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A Survey of the Narrative Source Material," In *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, 501-2.

to defeat Horus son of Pwensh, including creating a mist that disturbs the sight and a 200 cubit vault to collapse above the king, all countered by the Egyptian magician. Finally, when the Nubian magician realizes that his attempts are to no avail, he tries to disappear, but Horus son of Pwensh reveals his whereabouts and expels him from Egypt forever (6, 13ff.).

The similarities between the magicians' role in these two stories and the resemblances in the motifs of the magical duels place Imhotep and Horus son of Pwensh as magician heroes who played a significant part in defeating two of the greatest enemies of Egypt, the Assyrians and the Nubians. Thus they figure as the main factor that ensures the king's and Egypt's preservation of its national authority. This motif of a magician priest in the role of an authority equal to the king's took root around the Saite period, where official discourse also reveals an overshadowing of the king by his officials (see §(3.3). Here the officials take credit for important accomplishments, leaving the king's divine aspect to become eclipsed by his human nature.¹⁷⁹ Accordingly, in narratives from the Greco-Roman period, the king is frequently portrayed as subject to weakness, fear and despair (e.g. Petubastis), whereas the magicians or the skilled warriors act as the ones who solve the conflicts.¹⁸⁰

Finally, one manuscript from the Tebtunis temple library *Nechepsos, Petese, and the Book of Imhotep*¹⁸¹ forms the introduction to an astrological treatise, which recounts the discovery and decipherment of the manuscript by Petese, the Heliopolitan God's servant of Atum¹⁸² (see below). The text relates that a block of stone fell out of a wall by accident in the temple of Heliopolis, thus revealing the papyrus with the treatise. None other than Imhotep himself, the text states, had written this treatise, and the only learned priest who was able to decipher its contents was Petese. Subsequently, Petese presents the treatise to king Nechepsos, i.e. Necho II of the 26th Saite Dynasty (7th century BC). The episode places Petese on a par with his predecessor Imhotep, the two individuals being the only skilled priests who could understand the complex treatise.

The image of Imhotep and Necho's interest in astrology is also comparable with the motif found

¹⁷⁹ Discussed in detail in (3.3)

¹⁸⁰ Discussed in detail in (3.5)

¹⁸¹ The text is unpublished. It is the first extant Demotic attestation that allows the identification of king Nechepsos who is well known from Classical sources. His name "Nechepsos" is a derivative of the Egyptian *N3- k3w-p3-šs3w* "Necho the wise" = Coptic Necho *ⲡⲉⲱⲥ*. For preliminary remarks on text see Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 131ff, the name is discussed on p. 136, note 101. For identification of the king: K. Ryholt, "New Light on the Legendary King Nechepsos of Egypt," *JEA* 97, (2011): 61-72. See also: Ryholt, "The Life of Imhotep," In *Actes du IXe congrès international des études démotiques. Paris, 31 août - 3 septembre 2005*, 313, note 13 & 136, note 101. The Yale fragment is briefly mentioned in: J. F. Quack, "Die Spur des Magiers Petese," *CdE* 77, (2002): 89, note 59.

¹⁸² Petese's name occurs in a slight variation Petese son of "Meritem" rather than "Petitum", but evidence suggests that it the same individual, see Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 13.

in the introduction to the Greek astrological guidebook attributed to Thessalos of Tralles¹⁸³ from the 1st century AD. The introduction to this book relates that Thessalos had discovered an ancient manuscript of king Nechepsos containing medical cures affiliated with the signs of the Zodiac, but he fails to effectuate the cures. In Thebes, he spends the night in the temple in order to receive a divination from the gods on how to interpret the book. In his dream, Asclepius himself, whose Egyptian counterpart is Imhotep, provides Thessalos with the secret knowledge required for interpreting the manuscript, and Thessalos is thus able to effectuate the cures. Accordingly, in the Egyptian text, Nechepsos receives an astrological manuscript composed by Imhotep, while in the Greek text, Imhotep helps Thessalos interpreting Nechepsos' manuscript. This portrayal of Imhotep appearing as a healer providing cures and solutions for the person who seeks the divinations may possibly also have formed a motif in the incubation scene in *Khamwase and Siosiris* (1,1 ff.), where Mehuskhet, Khamwase's wife, spends the night in a temple in order to receive a healing instruction from a god in order to conceive a child from her husband.¹⁸⁴ Unfortunately, the beginning of the text is lost and the name of the temple where she spends the night along with the identity of the god who communicates with her in the dream are not preserved. Dieleman, however, notes a parallel to this scene in the biographical account on Tayimhotep's funerary stele from c. 42 BC.¹⁸⁵ Here, Tayimhotep relates that she was granted a male child after her husband, the high priest of Ptah, had fulfilled the directions given to him by Imhotep in a dream message.¹⁸⁶ Seeing that Mehuskhet had visited the temple especially in order to receive medical instructions on how to become pregnant, it is likely that Imhotep was the one who appeared in her dream, particularly because Khamwase himself was high priest of Ptah and that the story takes place at Memphis.¹⁸⁷ Thus Imhotep could have played an important role in this narrative, seeing that he would have been the one who affected Mehuskhet's pregnancy in order that Horus son of Pwensh could be reborn and save Egypt from destruction.

¹⁸³ Thessalos was a historical figure attested as a physician living in Rome during the first half of the first century AD. The entire text is discussed in (4.3.2). The text is attested in several Greek and Latin redactions: H. V. Friedrich, *Thessalos von Tralles: griechisch und lateinisch*. See also: I. Moyer, "Thessalos of Tralles and Cultural Exchange," In *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, 39-56.

¹⁸⁴ Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 234.

¹⁸⁵ BM EA147: E. A. E. Reymond, *From the Records of a Priestly Family in Memphis*, text 20, p. 165ff, pl. XII.

¹⁸⁶ see Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 234 note 125.

¹⁸⁷ Imhotep's cult was particularly popular in Thebes in the Hellenistic and Roman period: L. Kákosy, "Probleme der Religion im römerzeitlichen Ägypten," In *ANRW*, 2894–3049; 2973–2977. A Memphite setting is common in Demotic narrative, it being the archaic seat of the rule.

(2.4.2) Ubainer and Djadjaemankh

With regards to the written records, an equally enduring celebrity cannot be confirmed with certainty for the remaining three magician heroes in the story of *Khufu's Court*, namely Ubainer, Djadjaemankh and Djedi. Nonetheless, one manuscript from around the 19th/20th dynasty (between the 13th and 12th centuries BC), which renders the same constellation of magicians as that in *Khufu's Court*- with the exception of Djedi may be noted

The abovementioned pAthens National Library 1826, presumably from Deir el Medina, contains a collection of protective spells against nightmares and the spirits of the dead¹⁸⁸ One of the spells in this composition includes a drawing of 22 powerful magicians described as 'able spirits (*3h.w ikr.w*), and eminent officials (*sr.w ʕ3.w*) whose names, when placed around the neck, in an amulet for example, will guard any animal or human being from any of these evils. Among these, in a drawing made some 400 years after the date of the composition of *Khufu's Court*, are Imhotep, Ubainer,¹⁸⁹ and Djadjaemankh. Here, these individuals are depicted alongside other eminent figures such as Kheti, Neferti, and Hordjedef himself.¹⁹⁰ This grouping places Imhotep, Ubainer and Djadjaemankh as the "oldest" magicians amongst the group, a constellation evidently paralleled in *Khufu's Court*.

Although not much is known about the historical Imhotep, aside from the abovementioned inscription, the situation seems different with regards to Djadjaemankh. At Saqqara, a tomb owner from around the 6th dynasty whose name is written (*ḥm-m-nḥ*) described as "Overseer of the offices of the Royal administration." More interestingly, this individual's statue, identifies him as *smr wʕty ḥry sšt3 n pr dw3t im3ḥw ḥr ntr ʕ3 ḥm-m-nḥ* "Sole companion, master of secrets of the House of the Morning (i.e. robing room),¹⁹¹ venerated with the Great God *ḥm-m-nḥ*.¹⁹² The title *ḥry sšt3* associates this individual with the practice of magic and Fischer-Elfert¹⁹³ has noted that the tomb owner (which

¹⁸⁸ Fischer-Elfert, "Quelques textes et une vignette du papyrus magique n° 1826 de la Bibliothèque nationale d'Athènes," In *La magie en Égypte: à la recherche d'une définition; actes du colloque organisé par le Musée du Louvre les 29 et 30 septembre 2000*. 167-84; Fischer-Elfert, "Representations of the Past in New Kingdom Literature," In *Never Had the Like Occured: Egypt's View of its Past*, 128-30.

¹⁸⁹ The name occurs simply as Uba, which is probably a short form of his name, cf. Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 32.

¹⁹⁰ See Fischer-Elfert, "Representations of the Past in New Kingdom Literature," In *Never Had the Like Occured: Egypt's View of its Past*, 130, for more references attestations of the sages For Kheti and Neferti, see e.g., B. Mathieu, "Réflexions sur le 'Fragment Daressy' et ses hommes illustres," In *Parcourir l'éternité: hommages à Jean Yoyotte*.

¹⁹¹ For robing room, see e.g., A. M. Blackman, "The House of the Morning," *JEA* 5, (1918): 148-65.

¹⁹² Tomb: A. Mariette, *Les mastabas de l'Ancien Empire: fragment du dernier ouvrage de A. Mariette*, tomb D10, pp. 193-5., tomb D10, pp. 193-5. Statue: J. Harvey, *Wooden Statues of the Old Kingdom: A Typological Study*, obj. A 58, pp. 69-70.

¹⁹³ Fischer-Elfert, "Representations of the Past in New Kingdom Literature," In *Never Had the Like Occured: Egypt's View of its Past*, 129.

he reads *tp-m-ḥnh*) may be the same individual as Djadjaemankh of *Khufu's Court*, although he does not mention the statue.

I find that the inscription of the statue associates its owner with magical practice, and confirms that he could have been the inspiration for construing the character of the magician hero Djadjaemankh. The different reading in the Middle Kingdom story and pAthens 1826 is easily explained by applying the later value of the *tp*-sign as “*d3d3*” in reading the name of the Old Kingdom individual.¹⁹⁴ In this case, the historical setting of Djadjaemankh in the story with the reign of Sneferu would be an anachronism, placing him in the 4th dynasty rather than the 6.th However, anachronisms were not uncommon in Egyptian narratives, and it must be kept in mind that our notion of historical accuracy is problematic and circular; the notion implies our concept of history, which is stabilized by its opposition to fiction. In Egypt, it is very likely that this distinction was not drawn so sharply, and that stories were as true as their heroes. Accuracy is not the main goal of these stories but fictional past was made true through historical heroes (see also §(1.2.1).

Djadjaemankh and Imhotep appear to be the oldest historical figures whose identities were adopted in the literary tradition concerning magician heroes of whom there are substantial contemporary archeological remains. This condition, in its own right, testifies to the circumstance that the composers of Egyptian narratives sought historical figures as literary heroes as early as the Middle Kingdom, which poses the question whether all magician heroes, despite the lack of contemporary archeological evidence of their historicity, were, in fact, all historical.

(2.4.3) Merira

Two extant narratives concern the magician Merira. One is the Late Egyptian *Merira and the Divine Falcon* from the Ramesside Period (19th dynasty, c. 13th-12th century BC).¹⁹⁵ The other is the Demotic story of *Merira and King Sasobek* from the Saite period.¹⁹⁶ Unfortunately, the entire text of the first story is not preserved and what remains of it is a small papyrus fragment measuring 18x20cm, found in a disturbed private tomb in Deir el Medina.¹⁹⁷ *Merira and the Divine Falcon* describes Merira as a magician (*hry tp*) who also holds the title “general” (*mr-mš*). In the story, he employs his magical powers in order to defeat a divine falcon. It has been noted that this character bears many resemblances to his

¹⁹⁴ I thank Hratch Papazian for clarifying this reading of the name. An example for the value “*d3d3*” for the sign is in KRI, I, 178, cartouche 14 in the name *d3d3y*.

¹⁹⁵ pDM 39: S. Sauneron, “Deux pages d'un texte littéraire inédit. Papyrus Deir el-Médineh 39 (mise à jour par Yvan Koenig),” In *Livre du centenaire, 1880-1980*, 134-41.

¹⁹⁶ pVandier (proto-Demotic script): G. Posener, *Le Papyrus Vandier*.

¹⁹⁷ Tomb 1448: B. Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh 1929*, 116-20.

namesake in the Demotic story of *Merira and King Sasobek*.¹⁹⁸ The provenance of this document is unknown, but Posener had proposed a Theban origin for it, since it was purchased in Luxor.¹⁹⁹ These two namesakes were very likely perceived as one and the same individual, which may further be substantiated by the fact that they both are described as generals and magicians,²⁰⁰ and that both possess an ability to interact with divine beings: while Merira in the Late Egyptian story defeats a divine creature with the help of a spirit, in the Saite story, he is the only person who can appeal to the gods of the underworld for a prolongation of the life of a mortally ill king.²⁰¹

Merira was presumably perceived as a historical figure, which is suggested by the permanence of his figure in the narrative tradition for over 500 years (from the earliest extant story of the NK to the Saite period). In this context, these two stories about Merira would form the earliest example of a cycle of stories about magician heroes, which would accordingly place this literary tradition in the New Kingdom: that is some 500 years after the earliest extant narrative from the Khamwase Cycle.

Further observations may be made with regards to the two narratives concerning Merira's exploits that deserve attention. In *Merira and the Divine Falcon*, Merira is on a task to slay a divine falcon and is aided by a supernatural being (*p3 nht*, lit. the strong one). As Koenig already mentioned,²⁰² Meeks²⁰³ had suggested that such a supernatural being can inhabit the world of the living. This is unmistakably evident in the story of *Merira and the Falcon* and is analogous to the motif in *Doomed Prince* where the prince manages to escape his first two fates, but finds himself face to face with the third, the crocodile.²⁰⁴ The crocodile then asks for his help against a supernatural being (*p3 nht*), which lives in the water. The manuscript breaks off here, but presumably the prince is saved from his fate through aiding the crocodile. This parallel between the two motifs is not mentioned by Koenig but should not go unnoticed because it suggests that it was a theme particular to the New Kingdom tradition. However, both stories are too fragmented where the episodes including this being are concerned, leaving any further conclusions regarding its meaning rather complicated.

¹⁹⁸ Sauneron, "Deux pages d'un texte littéraire inédit. Papyrus Deir el-Médineh 39 (mise à jour par Yvan Koenig)," In *Livre du centenaire, 1880-1980*, 138, note (e).

¹⁹⁹ Posener, *Le Papyrus Vandier*, 1.

²⁰⁰ General: *mr-mš*, e.g. *Merira and the Divine Falcon*: 5 and *Merira and King Sasobek* 3, 8. Magician: *Merira and the Divine Falcon*: 8 *iw=f hr šd m hḳ3w=f* "he recited his magic," and *hry-tb* "magician" in *Merira and King Sasobek* 3, 8 and 10.

²⁰¹ The motif of the ill king and Merira's role are discussed in detail in (3.5). Ryholt has identified king Sasobek as an historical king from the Middle Kingdom (personal comment) and the historical identity of Merira within that period can be further studied when Ryholt's findings are published.

²⁰² Sauneron, "Deux pages d'un texte littéraire inédit. Papyrus Deir el-Médineh 39 (mise à jour par Yvan Koenig)," In *Livre du centenaire, 1880-1980*, 138, note (e).

²⁰³ D. Meeks, *Génies, Anges, Démons en Égypte*, 45.

²⁰⁴ *LES*, 1-9. Discussed in (3.4)

Another episode of the tale describes that Merira prepares a potion that includes urine upon which he recites words of magic (*šd m ḥk3*). He then uses the potion to prevent someone from going blind (8). As Koenig already noted,²⁰⁵ the application of urine by the Egyptians for healing blindness was mentioned in the Greek histories of Egypt of Herodotus (Book 2: 11) and Diodorus (Book 1: 59). The Greek versions relate that the gods had punished a king with blindness for ten years because he had attacked a river with a spear:²⁰⁶ the river being a symbol of the Nile god. An oracle then tells the king that the only cure would be to wash his eyes with the urine of a faithful woman.²⁰⁷ When the urine of several women failed to heal the king, including his own wife's, he finally found a woman who could cure him. Ryholt has identified the Demotic counterpart of the Greek version (*The Blinding of Pharaoh*) as part of the short stories in the *Petese Stories* attested from the Hellenistic and Roman periods.²⁰⁸ The motifs are almost identical except for a few details, more specifically that the Demotic version has the king spearing another human being, and that he must use "tears" of a virtuous woman rather than "urine." The Demotic version postdates the earliest Greek version of Herodotus with c. 500 years, which means that the account had been circulating in Egypt for some time before it was recorded on this Demotic manuscript. As noted by Ryholt, the Greek and the Demotic versions probably share the same origin.²⁰⁹ The Story of *Merira and the Divine Falcon* is thus one more reference to the motif in the magical tradition, which is almost 800 years younger than Herodotus' reference thus making it the oldest by far.

(2.5) Magicians in Demotic Literary Tradition

(2.5.1) Khamwase

The character Khamwase appears in different light than Imhotep. Historically, he is attested as the son of Ramses II (1279-1213 BC) and as high priest of the temple of Ptah in Memphis.²¹⁰ In the narratives, he is often designated simply as *stne*, which originates from the priestly title 'Sem' (see above) and becomes a fixed name for the Memphite priesthood in Demotic narratives.²¹¹ Khamwase is also well known for his meticulous restoration of ancient monuments, which has lead several scholars to

²⁰⁵ Sauneron, "Deux pages d'un texte littéraire inédit. Papyrus Deir el-Médineh 39 (mise à jour par Yvan Koenig)," In *Livre du centenaire, 1880-1980*, 139, note (o).

²⁰⁶ i.e. the river being the manifestation of the Nile god.

²⁰⁷ A parallel from real life is Ostraca Brooklyn Museum (Inv. no. 37.1821) where the a dream message is received in the incubation hall of the temple of Amon by the blind Thothertais, a servant of Amon in the Embalming House, see A. Volten, "Das Demotische Ostrakon im Brooklyn Museum (Inv. No. 37.1821 E)," *Acta Orientalia* 26, (1962): 129-32.

²⁰⁸ Text and translation: K. Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 4: The Story of Petese son of Petetum and Seventy other Good and Bad Stories (P. Petese)*, 31-46, pl. 2. Petese is discussed below, for the narrative see (§5.6).

²⁰⁹ K. Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II (P. Petese II)*, 41.

²¹⁰ For the historical Khamwase, see: Gomaà, *Chaemwese, Sohn Ramses' II. und Hoherpriester von Memphis*.

²¹¹ Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 226.

describe him as the first historical Egyptologist or archaeologist.²¹² This occupation was presumably also the inspiration for his character in the cycle as a man with great interest for ancient writings and monuments. For example, in the episode in the cycle that describes him discovering the ‘Book of Thoth’ discussed above, paralleled in spell 167-69 of the Book of the Dead.

The earliest extensive story of the cycle is *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* from Thebes from the early Ptolemaic Period. The second extensive story is *Khamwase and Siosiris*, which may be from Fayoum dating from the 1st century AD.²¹³ Additional fragmentary passages have also been identified. They could either be “new” stories of the cycle or different wordings of the already identified stories: pCairo 30692²¹⁴ and pMarburg Inv. 38²¹⁵ from the middle Ptolemaic period, and pCarlsberg 207²¹⁶ from the second century AD, from the Tebtunis temple Library in Fayoum. The frame stories of both *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* and *Khamwase and Siosiris* are set in the reign of Ramses II,²¹⁷ and are thus chronologically accurate.

In *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah*, Khamwase breaks into the tomb of Naneferkaptah and, by means of his magical skills, steals the sacred book of Thoth. Naneferkaptah, who is a skilled magician himself, causes Khamwase to have a surreal experience in which a woman, Tabubu, seduces him and persuades him to give her all his belongings and kill his own children.²¹⁸ Subsequently, Khamwase awakes from this surreal experience and acknowledges the powers of Naneferkaptah. He returns the book and arranges for a distinguished burial for Naneferkaptah and his family. pCarlsberg 207 is very fragmentary, but shares some similarities with this story. The narrative would thus have retained its popularity for over 300 years.

Naneferkaptah and Siosiris relates how Khamwase is granted a son, Siosiris, who in reality turns out to be the incarnation of Horus son of Pwensh, a skilled sorcerer (see below) who lived during the reign of Thutmosis III, i.e. c. 200 years before Ramses II. Horus son of Pwensh had come back in human form to protect Egypt from humiliation. This threat came in the form of a Nubian sorcerer who appears in court carrying a papyrus scroll, challenging anyone at court to read it, but without unrolling it. As it turns out, Horus son of Pwensh had once before defeated this Nubian magician when Thutmosis was king. At

²¹² e.g., M. Depauw, *A Companion to Demotic Studies*, 87. Also: S. Snape, "Khaemwese and the Present Past: History and the Individual in Ramesside Egypt," In *Ramesside Studies in Honour of K. A. Kitchen*.

²¹³ For text edition of *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* see note 148; *Siosiris Khamwase and Siosiris* see note 148.

²¹⁴ Text: W. Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Denkmäler II: Die demotischen Papyrus*, 112-15, pl. LI. For the identification of the fragment: Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 4: The Story of Petese son of Petetum and Seventy other Good and Bad Stories* (P. Petese), 84.

²¹⁵ J. F. Quack, "Ein Setne-Fragment in Marburg," *Enchoria* 30, (2009): 71-4.

²¹⁶ J. F. Quack and K. Ryholt, "Notes on the Setne Story P. Carlsberg 207," In *A Miscellany of Demotic Texts and Studies*, 141-64; J. Tait, "Two Columns of a Setna Text," In *The Carlsberg Papyri I: Demotic Texts from the Collection*, 19-46.

²¹⁷ E.g. *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* 5, 4: "Setna Khamwase son of Usermaatira" (i.e. Ramses II) and *Khamwase and Siosiris* 2, 28 "a day occurred when pharaoh Usermaatira..."

²¹⁸ This motif is discussed in detail in (5.5).

that time, the Nubian had used his magic to transfer the king to Nubia while he was asleep where he suffered 500 whiplashes in public. Horus son of Pwensh had retaliated and saved Thutmosis and Egypt from this Nubian threat. At Ramses' court, Horus son of Pwensh recites the contents of the papyrus scroll without unrolling it. The two magicians then engage in a magic battle that results in the Nubian's defeat and expulsion from Egypt, vowing never to return again. Horus son of Pwensh then reveals his true identity and disappears, and Khamwase is granted a new son.

Common for both *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* and *Naneferkaptah and Siosiris* is Khamwase playing a secondary role, as opposed to the magicians Naneferkaptah and Horus son of Pwensh, who both are skilled magicians from the past: in the former story, he is unable to keep the Book of Thoth, and in the latter he is unable to read the scroll brought by the Nubian sorcerer without unrolling it. His skills are thus inferior to those of Naneferkaptah and Horus son of Pwensh in the two narratives. It would therefore appear that the emphasis in the texts lies in Khamwase's nature as a learned man who recognizes the authority of his predecessors. This attribute comes through in his role as the one who fathers the son through whom Horus son of Pwensh is reincarnated and his recognition of Naneferkaptah as his superior in magical skill. This aspect of his character may be interpreted in light of his reputation as a collector of ancient texts and a restorer of ancient monuments. Examples that support this hypothesis are the above-mentioned Book of the Dead allegedly discovered by him and the actual restorations he had undertaken, including the Serapeum and the Old Kingdom pyramid complex, which were commemorated in monumental texts that remained clearly visible for several generations after his time.²¹⁹ Khamwase is thus the mediator between past and present in the narratives in a similar way as he was when he was alive.

(2.5.2) Ptahhotep

Another Memphite priest attested in more than one source is "Setne Ptahhotep"²²⁰ from pCairo CG 30758²²¹ and pDem. Saq. 1.²²² The texts in which he occurs are too fragmentary and therefore his role in the stories is not known. pDem Saq. 1 does not seem to concern him specifically and seems to involve plots of murder and conspiracy by priests against each other. In this story a certain priest, (w^cb)

²¹⁹ For the texts, cf. Gomaà, *Chaemwese, Sohn Ramses' II. und Hoherpriester von Memphis*, 44 & 63; transcriptions on p. 101-6 & 110-11. See also: K. A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant. The Life and Times of Ramesses II, King of Egypt*, 103-9.

²²⁰ e.g., pDem Saq. 1. 14, 20 & 21: *Pth-htp stm*: H. S. Smith and W. J. Tait, *Saqqâra Demotic Papyri I (P. Dem. Saq. I)*, Text: 1-64, pl. 2. See also the discussion on „Setne“ fragments in: Tait, "Two Columns of a Setna Text," In *The Carlsberg Papyri I: Demotic Texts from the Collection*, 34.

²²¹ Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Denkmäler II: Die demotischen Papyrus*, 145-148, pl. LVIII.

²²² Smith and Tait, *Saqqâra Demotic Papyri I (P. Dem. Saq. I)*, 1-69 pls. 1-3.

Hormakheru²²³ and some god's servants (*hm ntr*) of Horus of Letopolis²²⁴ seem to play a significant role. The story is also part of pDem Saq. 2, which involves the abduction of a king, paralleled in *Khamwase and Siosiris*. The fragments further suggest that certain motifs were popular in stories about magician priests in Greco-Roman Egypt, particularly the motif of kidnapping the king.

(2.5.3) Petese

Petese Stories is an extensive narrative that includes 70 stories of women's virtues and vices, 35 stories for each aspect.²²⁵ The earliest extant version of this composition dates to the Ptolemaic period (c. 3rd century BC). It was found among the discarded papyri in a pit near the sacred animal necropolis at Saqqara (pDem. Saq. 4).²²⁶ The latest version of the *Petese Stories* is of Roman date and was found in the Tebtunis temple library in Fayoum (2nd century AD). This represents a period of at least 400 years in which stories about Petese had been circulating in Lower Egypt. As for Petese himself, there is no documentation prior to or contemporary with the earliest extant manuscript that may verify his historicity. However, the sources do suggest that he was considered a historical figure (see below), especially since the evidence that has so far been studied has shown that the majority of the magician protagonists were perceived as such.

The frame story of the narrative relates that Petese had used his magic powers and summoned a ghost that informed him that only 40 days remained of his life. Subsequently, Petese secured expenses for his burial through exchanging his knowledge about certain books with the priests at the temple for money. Aspiring to create a literary testimony in memory of his name, Petese created two baboons out of wax and gave them life through his magical powers, and instructed them to find seventy stories about the virtues and vices of women. The stories then follow in a collection of 35 stories about women's virtues and 35 of women's vices.²²⁷ Not all stories are preserved and many are in a rather poor state. One of the 70 stories of this manuscript is the *Blinding of Pharaoh*²²⁸ mentioned above, which is paralleled in the Greek stories of Herodotus and Diodorus in which a king can only be healed from blindness through rubbing his eyes with tears/urine of a virtuous woman. Ryholt further notes the intertextual

²²³ e.g.: pDem. Saq. 1. 13, 31: for text, see note 220

²²⁴ Several attestations throughout the text; e.g.: pDem. Saq. 1. 9, 14 "all] the prophets of Horus Lord of Letopolis" (*hm ntr n Hr nb Shm*).

²²⁵ Text editions: Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 4: The Story of Petese son of Petetum and Seventy other Good and Bad Stories* (P. Petese); Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II* (P. Petese II).

²²⁶ Smith and Tait, *Saqqâra Demotic Papyri I* (P. Dem. Saq. I), discuss the archaeological context of the texts in their introduction. Text edition of pDem Saq. 4 is on pp. 149-53, pl. 11. Excavation reports: H. S. Smith, S. Davies, and K. J. Frazer, *The Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara: The Main Temple Complex, the Archaeological Report*.

²²⁷ §(5.6) discusses this theme.

²²⁸ See note 208 for reference.

fame of this composition as its theme of the dichotomy of women's character is echoed in other contemporary Demotic texts such as *The Harpist's Song*²²⁹ where the drunken harpist Hariothes "repeats the words about the scorn of the women" (*whm dd n ny hsf n shm.t*: 4,9), and the *Insinger* wisdom text,²³⁰ which refers to the stories about the vices of women by their actual title: "There is (much) that I know about the (stories) of vices of the bad woman" (*wn t3 nty-iw-iw=y rh st hr p3 hsf n shm.t b(y)n.t*: 8,10).²³¹

It appears that Petese becomes more popular from the Roman period onwards. *Nechepsos*, *Petese*, and *the Book of Imhotep* have been discussed above as a source testifying to Petese's association with astrology (2.4.1), to which a few more sources may be added. In the 3rd century AD, he appears as a historical figure in the Greek literary tradition as the sage who had instructed Plato in astrology when he visited Egypt (=Astrological Dialogue of Greek pRylands 63).²³² This example may be compared to the Imhotep motif in the Greek Thessalos text mentioned above where Imhotep appears in Thessalos' dream to help him interpret the medico-astrological text written by Nechepsos. In this context, both Imhotep and Petese function as authorities in astrology. The Thessalos text survives in many redactions while pRylands 63 has an Egyptian provenance, but the common motif of the Egyptian priest as an educator of Greek scholars is doubtless Egyptian, establishing the Egyptian priest as the highest source of knowledge.²³³

The historical setting of these texts thus associate Petese with king Nechopsos (7th century BC), i.e. a Saite setting, and Plato (5th century BC). This is most likely an anachronism, since it is improbable that the texts are referring to two like-named individuals, from the same city, with same titles and renowned in the same field.²³⁴

Petese's memory appears to have endured in several other sources from the second to the tenth century AD.²³⁵ Although this period falls outside the scope of the present thesis, they should still be mentioned. The examples include the first century Greek physician Dioscorus' *Materia Medica* "The materials of medicine," 5: 98 (oldest copy from the 5th century AD),²³⁶ which refers to a Petese as a

²²⁹ H.-J. Thissen, *Der verkommene Harfenspieler. Eine altägyptische Invektive* (P. Wien KM 3877).

²³⁰ F. Lexa, *Papyrus Insinger. Les enseignements moraux d'un scribe égyptien du premier siècle après J.-C. Texte démotique avec transcription, traduction française, commentaire, vocabulaire et introduction grammaticale et littéraire*.

²³¹ Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II* (P. Petese II), 11-12; Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 4: The Story of Petese son of Petetum and Seventy other Good and Bad Stories* (P. Petese), 13.

²³² C. H. Roberts, de Monins J. J., and A. S. Hunt, *Catalogue of the Greek Papyri in the John Rylands Library. Vol. 2. Documents of the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods* (nos. 62-465), 2-3 number 63. See also: Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II* (P. Petese II), 12-16.

²³³ cf. also chapter (4.3.2) on the Egyptian magician in Greek traditions.

²³⁴ Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 15.

²³⁵ An exhaustive study of Petese with further references is in: Quack, "Die Spur des Magiers Petese."

²³⁶ M Wellmann, *Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei De materia medica*.

source of information with regards to limestone. Another source is the Greek alchemical tradition (3rd century?) in which a Petese is mentioned as king of Armenia. Finally, in the Persian bibliographer Ibn al-Nadim's Arabic manuscript *Kitab al Fihrist* (c. 10th century AD), an exhaustive index of books written by Persians, Arabs and authors of other nationalities, a dialogue between a Petese and Dioscorus²³⁷ is mentioned in the section on alchemy. These sources indicate that the famous Petese of Heliopolis had evolved from magician to astrologer to the famous alchemist in the later Greek and Arabic sources.

(2.5.4) Horus son of Pwensh

Another Heliopolitan magician is the lector priest (*hr tb*) Horus son of Pwensh. He occurs as the reincarnation of Siosiris in *Khamwase and Siosiris* discussed above, who saves Egypt from humiliation. Another unpublished text is preserved on 7 different fragments in Berlin,²³⁸ which appear to be fragments of three different copies of one story.²³⁹ It mentions Horus son of Pwensh, priests of the sun god, and the use of magic. Other noteworthy themes are the creation of a palanquin out of wax, a Nubian ruler, as well as a Book of Thoth, which are all paralleled in *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* thus indicating that it is the same story or a different version of it.²⁴⁰

The Berlin texts associate Hor son of Pwensh with a pharaoh called *W3h-ib-rꜥ-mn Tꜥh-ms*, which combine the names of kings Apries (589-570 BC) and Amasis (570-526 BC) and indicate a Saite setting. In *Khamwase and Siosiris*, on the other hand, he is reincarnated in the reign of Ramses II (c. 1250) and is said to have lived in the reign of Tuthmosis III (c. 1450 BC), confusing the chronology. Ryholt favors a Saite setting for this magician, as suggested by the Berlin fragments and by the fact that it is the most common setting in Demotic narratives.²⁴¹ However, it is possible that the authors, in choosing Khamwase as the protagonist in his role as mediator between past and present, as discussed above, had consciously fitted the chronology in placing Horus son of Pwensh in the time of Thutmosis III.

While Petese's memory had survived in the Greek and Arabic traditions, Horus son of Pwensh was already mentioned in an Aramaic text.²⁴² This manuscript is from the 5th century BC from

²³⁷ The name occurs as بدسيوس 'Bedsyus' in Arabic: G. Flügel, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 354. See also: B Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadim. A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture. Volume II*, 852, n. 69.

²³⁸ Preliminary remarks in K.-T. Zauzich, "Neue literarische Texte in demotischer Schrift," *Enchoria* 8, no. 2 (1978): 33-8.

²³⁹ Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 14.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ He sees that the ancient authors did not consider it problematic to stretch dates and associate the characters with other periods or events and finds evidence suggesting that king-lists (although they did exist) were not always available or consulted: Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 16. See also (1.2.1) where historical setting is discussed.

²⁴² pBritish Library Pap. CVI (a)+(b) recto: B. Porten, "The Prophecy of Hor bar Punesh and the Demise of Righteousness: An Aramaic Papyrus in the British Museum," In *Res severa verum gaudium. Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65. Geburtstag am 8. Juni 2004*.

Elephantine, which makes it the oldest extant source concerning this magician. The story seems to be a variant of an Egyptian original and preserves an encounter between a king and the magician whose prophecies are “susceptible of interpretation either as a blessing or curse.”²⁴³ The existence of this text suggests that Egyptian narratives about Horus son of Pwensh already existed in the 5th century BC and perhaps even earlier.

(2.5.5) Hareus

Finally, some texts should be mentioned in relation to the theme of Heliopolitan priests. One is Hareus son of Pahat who appears in pCarlsberg 422²⁴⁴ and pCarlsberg 159.²⁴⁵ The text is fragmented and only line 12 refers to “casting a spell” (ꜥš *sh*). It explains that Hareus son of Pahat was adopted by a man called Hareus-of-the-children. Another theme in the story is Hareus falling in love and marrying a daughter of a servant of Atum, and the birth of their daughter. It further includes the topic of conflict between Hareus and his adopted brothers over a share of money, which is comparable to the above-mentioned pDem Saq. 1-2 where priests plot against each other. Together, these themes of adoption, marriage, and conflict portray themes of a more practical and realistic nature, as opposed to the priest’s interference in the grander political, royal, and divine sphere. Unfortunately, the texts are too damaged to examine, but if further manuscripts of this sort were to appear, it would be interesting to compare them with the magician texts discussed here.

(2.6) Conclusion

It has been argued that the literary function of the magician priest lies in the nature of his association to Thoth as his provider of effective magical knowledge: knowledge unavailable to humans. The priest utilizes this wisdom righteously, for example to aid the king and the entire country, and thus influences society and the course of history. The magician thus represented a distinct class of society, whose knowledge influenced almost every aspect of life, including the security of the king. The archeological and literary materials conform to this image. However, seeking secret knowledge for the sake of curiosity was considered inappropriate. Djedi’s reluctance to inform the king about Thoth’s shrines and

²⁴³ B. Porten, "The Prophecy of Hor bar Punesh and the Demise of Righteousness: An Aramaic Papyrus in the British Museum," In *Res severa verum gaudium. Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65. Geburtstag am 8. Juni 2004*, 433., 433 and Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 14.

²⁴⁴ Unpublished, see: K. Ryholt, "An Elusive Narrative Belonging to the Cycle of Stories about the Priesthood of Heliopolis," In *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen, 23-27 August 1999*, 361-6.

²⁴⁵ Unpublished, see: Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 1ff.

the punishment of Naneferkaptah and Khamwase when they obtain the Book of Thoth demonstrate this notion.²⁴⁶

It has also been argued that texts from the earliest extant narrative (MK) onwards focus on hero figures that were perceived as historical. Whether these were de facto great sages and magicians is impossible to determine, but linking historical individuals to the texts seems to have been a vital element. The monuments, in this context, would have provided an excellent source of reference, as seen with figures like Imhotep, Djadjaemankh, and Khamwase. The biographical and temple texts in this context, assisted in forming the literary magician hero. The resulting character transmitted an image that conformed to a contemporary self-reflection of the priestly audience and at the same time idyllically portrayed him to the outer world. This is seen in relation to preservation of identity and power (in the form of knowledge), elevating the priests to members of a select sphere in society. This attempt was successful in the literary tradition, and the stories about the exploits of famous magicians circulated across Egypt, and some even reached the Greek traditions through classical historians such as Herodotus and Diodorus. Through the Greek sources, which were of great importance to medieval Arabs, the fame of certain heroes could be transmitted into the Arabic world, such as Petese. One text that has not been mentioned in the discussion to which I here briefly refer, is the Greek pHaun. 400.²⁴⁷ It is a single fragmentary column of a narrative from the 2nd century AD found in Egypt that features a god's servant named Tinouphis, i.e. *Ἐν-ἡφρ* and the motifs in the texts share an extraordinary commonality with Egyptian narratives: his name, title, and magical abilities, as well as subjects such as adultery and conflict, in addition to the date and provenance of the manuscript, all point to it being inspired by an Egyptian original such as the texts here discussed. In the same manner that the priests became educators of the Greek scholars in Egyptian and some Greek literature, it is likely a text as pHaun. transmitted further Egyptian narrative traditions to the Greek world. This is also paralleled by the Aramaic story of Horus son of Pwensh, which seems to have been Egyptian in origin.

²⁴⁶ Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 229.

²⁴⁷ S. A Stephens and J. J. Winkler, eds., *Ancient Greek Novels: The Fragments. Introduction, Text, Translation, and Commentary*, 82.; J. F. Quack, *Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte III: Die demotische und gräko-ägyptische Literatur*, 121.; Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 15.

(3) *Literary Portrayals of Kingship*

(3.1) Introduction

From engaging in homosexual relations, to having massive hangovers, to completely failing to keep peace in Egypt, kings in fictional narratives exhibit everything else but a behavior that conforms to official ideological representations. The majority of the royal figures in fictional narratives were actual historical figures, which has been understood as a demonstration that their authors and audience knew of potential or actual failings of rulers,²⁴⁸ thereby identifying certain royal figures as culturally “unpopular” or “popular” kings.

The present chapter aims at shedding more light on the portrayals of royal figures in fictional narratives. It draws on the work of Keith Oatley, who in his article: “A taxonomy of the emotions of literary response and a theory of identification in fictional narrative” (1994) described three kinds of narrative emotions that are evoked when the narrative world is entered: sympathy, identification, and empathy, all of which are closely related and triggered through the narrative motifs. He argued that the basic acceptance of the meaning of a specific text occurs when the audience has a shared cultural background and interprets the text in similar ways. Accordingly, the narrative emotion evoked by the text conforms to the general cultural and social norms concerning the narrative motif. In the present chapter I propose to reverse the process sketched by Oatley and deduce the “emotion” of the audience by way of the motifs. Thus I expect to gain a clearer understanding of which kings were presented in a positive light and which in a negative. Intertextuality is here drawn upon in the discussion of the motifs, because it provides an understanding on how audience of fictional narratives could have negotiated the “messages” in the stories and interpreted their meanings according to their own cultural background.

Before elaborating further on the subject matter of the present chapter, I first present two main aspects of kingship that form an integral historical background to my contextualization of the texts. That is the ideological representation of kingship, and the notion of royal fallibility (from the 7th century BC onwards). In ancient Egypt, ideological portrayals of the king were the theme of discourse in several genres of literary texts throughout its history. Fictional narratives, however, provided plenty of space for addressing the *human* nature of the king as opposed to his *divine* aspect. Here, the king is portrayed as a being that is receptive of basic psychological emotions such as boredom, lust, fear, greed,

²⁴⁸ J. Baines, “Kingship, Definition of Culture and Legitimation,” In *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, 19.

cunningness, irresolution, and pain: that is to say all the attributes which are contradictory to and fall outside of the ideological representations of the king. However, Middle and Late Egyptian narratives appear to have *addressed* these aspects to a certain limit, whereas Demotic stories certainly *confronted* them to the extent that even the king's capacity of being a king was questioned. I understand that this confrontation in Demotic narratives was a result of the concept of royal fallibility, a development that took root in the Saite period (7th century BC) and continued until the Roman period. It implies the notion that the king fell from the domain of the divine and became subject to the gods' punishment on the same level as his human subjects.²⁴⁹ Common for all the stories, however, was an imperative that their historical setting was in the remote past distancing the royal image in the narratives from the contemporary ruling king, and thus not reflecting any critique of his ruling.²⁵⁰ Accordingly, representations of kingship here discussed are grouped before and after the late period.

Initially, I present an overview of the ideological aspect of kingship and of the concept of royal fallibility. Subsequently, representations of royal figures in the narratives are discussed in one section on Middle and Late Egyptian narratives and one on Demotic narratives. My focus lies on royal figures on whom there are substantial sources in order to gain a proper perspective on the subject, but I also include portrayals of unnamed kings when the motif significantly contributes to the analysis.²⁵¹

(3.2) Ideology of Kingship

In ancient Egypt the concept of Maat (order/cosmos) was the most distinct ideological notion that embodied the sacred and secular, as well as the formal and moral: it was the theme of discourse in several genres of literary texts and the fundamental component of ritual offering to the gods depicted in temples. The king's role for sustaining Maat was decisive because Isfet (disorder/chaos) was constantly threatening its existence.²⁵² In the Heliopolitan cosmogony, the god Atum ruled as the first king over the cosmos that emerged from him. In an act of self-generation, he produced the first divine

²⁴⁹ This notion is borrowed from A. B. Lloyd, cf. note 259

²⁵⁰ See (1.2.1) for a discussion on historical setting and interpretations (with references).

²⁵¹ As mentioned, Ryholt is in the process of composing a study on Egyptian kings and historical narrative literature from Greco-Roman Egypt and I thank him for providing important information relevant for this chapter.

²⁵² The literature on ancient Egyptian kingship is enormous. The following works have been consulted for the issues raised in this discussion: D. B. O'Connor and D. P. Silverman, eds., *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*. Baines deals with kingship in its official manifestations (titularies and their extensions) as well as the social and divine context (rhetorical developments and their contexts; the maintenance of order in a bounded cosmos), cf. J. Baines, "Ancient Egyptian Kingship: Official Forms, Rhetoric, Context," In *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, 16-53. See J. Assmann, *Ägypten. Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur*, especially chapter 3 for cosmography, the conception of cosmic processes, cosmos and time, and the relation between gods and cosmos. English translation of this work: J. Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*.

couple, Shu (air) and Tefnut (fire) who produced Geb (earth) and Tefnut (sky). The subsequent generation came in the form of Osiris and Isis, with their son Horus, and Nephtys and Seth. Shu, then Geb succeeded Atum on the throne and after Geb, Osiris ruled first but was assassinated by his brother Seth. The royal office thus fell to Horus, but only as a claim because he had to fight for it, avenging the death of his father. This sequence of generations corresponds to the succession of rulers on earth: cosmogony materializes as cratogony, a mythical account of the emergence and development of political power. Thus, the office of Atum had passed through the cosmogonic succession of the gods to Osiris and from him to the succession of historical kings in whom his son Horus was incarnate.²⁵³

Egyptian society was established in the cosmos by the creator god as the norm for all other societies where Egyptian kingship constituted the ideal form of governance. Even though cosmos was strong, it was also weak in all its aspects (divine, human, natural) and it had to endure repetitive rebirths to guarantee its strength and validity. During this process it had to be persistently defended against the forces of chaos, which constantly surrounded it and threatened its existence. The king was the sole authority that ensured this process through which he also ensured the survival of the community. His role in this perpetual process is well illustrated, for example, on the walls of the New kingdom royal tombs where the sun god triumphs over the serpent of chaos (Apep) in his journey through the hours of the night. Each night, the sun god descended in the west with his entourage of gods and the (deceased) king and battled against chaos. At the crux of the night, the aged god merged with Osiris, the god of the dead, and was reborn.²⁵⁴

In the earthly sphere, this process was re-enacted by the king who defeated Egypt's enemies and made certain that her dominance was universally acknowledged. In this manner, he was repeating the divine pattern and his actions on the terrestrial realm of the cosmos paralleled the divine processes that were occurring concurrently in both the celestial realm and the netherworld: in the sky the sun god ruled the universe and intermittently defeated the chaotic forces that threatened to bring cosmos to an end, paralleled in the king overthrowing Egypt's enemies; in the netherworld, the sun god had to suffer a form of death and regeneration in order to be reborn the next day and to be protected from violent chaotic forces while this process went on. The dual and parallel activity of king and god was thus vital for the survival of the cosmos, and hence of Egyptian society.

Amongst the living, the king was the main figure who maintained the required cultic links between humanity and the gods, accordingly guaranteeing the deities' own survival and at the same time instigating their benevolence towards Egypt and her people. In reality, the priests acted as the

²⁵³ Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*, 119ff.

²⁵⁴ cf. E. Hornung, *Das Amduat: die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes. Teil 1 und 2*, 117-18; E. Hornung, *Das Amduat: die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes. Teil 3: die Kurzfassung. Nachträge*, 14-15.

king's delegates in performing the rituals, while he himself ideally remained represented as the sole ritualist between the two domains. In short, the king was the priest of all deities, who maintained the power of the gods and through that the cosmic order as well; he was responsible for the economic well-being and ordered life of the Egyptian people; he was a soldier who repelled the enemies of Egypt and guaranteed the continuance of ordered life.²⁵⁵

In this cultural system and its associated values where the gods were the ultimate focus, temples had supremacy for depicting the ideal. Here, the divine king was portrayed as the protector of Maat, the link between humans and gods, and the protector of order in society. Other media for representations of the king are the inscriptions on boundary stelae such as those of Senwosret III (12th dynasty, c. 1870– 1831 BC). I here present a section of the greater Semna stela²⁵⁶ of Senwosret III, which was set up at the southern limit of Egypt in Nubia, and contained the king's lengthy speech, exalting his own qualities and his achievements in subduing the Nubians:²⁵⁷

(Senwosret is) One who does not sleep (with) a matter on his mind, but who takes thought for (hmt) the humble (tw3.w) and stands for mercy (ʿh3 hr sf). One who is not lenient to the enemy who attacks him (tm sfn n hry ph sw). Who attacks (ph) when he is attacked, but who desists (gr) when (he) is desisted. Who answers a matter according to what transpires in it (wsb md.t mi hpr.t im=s). Because: as for desisting (gr) after attacking (ph), it is strengthening the heart of the enemy (sshm ib pw n hry). Aggression is bravery (knt pw 3d), and to retreat is vile (hs.t pw hm.t). One who is driven back from his border is a real coward (hm pw m3c rwy hr t3š=f). For the Nubian (nhs) listens only to fall at a word (xr n r). It is responding (wSb) to him which makes him retreat (hm); but if one is aggressive (3d) against him, he shows his back (dd=f s3=f). Retreating, he tends toward aggression. Indeed, they are not men of worth (n rmt is nt šf.t). They are wretched (hwrw.w), broken hearted (sdw.w ib.w). My Majesty has observed this, without prevarication (nn m ims), for I have carried off their women and I have brought away their inhabitants, coming forth to their wells, driving away their cattle, cutting down their grain, and setting fire therein. (Lines 7-16)

²⁵⁵ Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*, 221.

²⁵⁶ cf. S. J. Seidelmayer, "Zu Fundort und Aufstellungskontext der großen Semna-Stele Sesostri's III," *SAK* 28, (2000): 233-42. The author discusses whether the stela was erected in the context of a royal cult chapel, originally located in front of the eastern wall of the fortress of Semna. Contested in: C. Vogel, "This Far and not a Step Further! The Ideological Concept of Ancient Egyptian Boundary Stelae," In *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature. Proceedings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3-7 May 2009*, 320-41. The author argues that although later kings revered stelae of their deified predecessors within temples it does not necessarily mean that these monuments were set up in a cultic environment at the time of their erection; it is possible that the stelae were originally raised at easily visible spots, rather than in invisible shrines.

²⁵⁷ Text: *AgLes*, 83-84. Translation: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 337-8.

The direct function of the Semna stela was rather carried by its physical presence than the content of its texts, but in substance the text nevertheless deals with key themes of the nature and duty of kingship.²⁵⁸ From the text, the following attributes of the king may be recognized: he is effective and resolute. He is a brave warrior, a thoughtful and merciful leader, who is defensive of his borders but also a supporter of peace. He is superior and knowledgeable on foreign policy, and most importantly, honest and wise. Hence, the Semna conforms to ideological representations of kingship in linking the theme of reciprocity between king and god, the defense and maintenance of order, and the dedication of success to the gods.

(3.3) Royal Fallibility

From the late Saite period onwards, a gradual change in the concept of kingship, which sharply contrasts the normative royal ideology, begins to take root.²⁵⁹ What seems to have happened is that the disorder and fragmentation of central authority beginning with the Saite period demolished the divine quality surrounding the king. The Saite period was the last in Egyptian history with native rule. It began with a great deal of political unrest between the Assyrians, the Kushites and local Egyptian rulers, all fighting for control over Egypt till the 26th dynasty was established in 664 BC.²⁶⁰ Subsequently, Egypt fell under Persian domination (on two occasions), then Ptolemaic rule, and finally it became a Roman province. This resulted in the notion that the king could fail in the sight of the gods themselves, thus bringing him nearer the mere mortals and the moral codes that applied to them. Just as man could violate the divine order, incur divine wrath, and be punished, so could the king.²⁶¹ This transformation is mostly identifiable in the self-presentation of private inscriptions from the period, while only a few examples may be offered from the iconographical records. This circumstance, obviously, lies in the nature of the respective types of texts, but also because the king was not formally stripped of all his worth; it was his power that was now considered earthly and reliant on the gods, rather than being inherent in his character. An example of this principle in the iconographic portrayals is the 30th dynasty

²⁵⁸ C. Eyre, "The Semna Stela: Quotation, Genre, and Functions of Literature," In *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim*, 138-49.

²⁵⁹ The following outline draws from: A. B. Lloyd, "The Late Period: 664-323 BC," In *Ancient Egypt: A Social History*; A. B. Lloyd, "Egypt: 404-323 BC," In *The Cambridge Ancient History VI: The Fourth Century BC*, 337-345; E. Otto, *Die biographischen Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit: ihre geistesgeschichtliche und literarische Bedeutung*; A. B. Lloyd, "Nationalist Propaganda in Ptolemaic Egypt," *Historia* 31, (1982): 33-55.

²⁶⁰ For more detail on the events of the Saite period cf. A. Spalinger, "The Concept of the Monarchy during the Saite Epoch: An Essay of Synthesis," *Orientalia* 67, (1978): 12-36; K. Jansen-Winkeln, "Bild und Charakter der ägyptischen 26. Dynastie," *AoF* 28, (2001): 165-82. For the two Persian dominations, see: P. Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre*. See also Lloyd, "Egypt: 404-323 BC," In *The Cambridge Ancient History VI: The Fourth Century BC*. The literature with a Saite historical setting is discussed in §(4.4).

²⁶¹ Lloyd, "Nationalist Propaganda in Ptolemaic Egypt," 41.

statue of king Nectanebo II (360-343 BC) from Heliopolis, which is similar to the statue of king Khafra from the Old Kingdom, where the king is sitting on the throne as the Horus embraces him. While both statues evoke the traditional concepts of the link between god and king, the actual scale of the Falcon god on the statues reveals a contrast in the extent to which that link stretches. Khafra's statue acknowledges the king's role as the incarnation of Horus, as the god embraces him, thus asserting his individual majestic power. Nectanebo's statue, on the other hand, acknowledges his total reliance on the god as the king is portrayed on a very small scale standing between the legs of the Falcon god.²⁶²

Although earlier texts and inscriptions did occasionally address the concept of royal fallibility, e.g. *Instruction to Merikara*,²⁶³ and that independency from the king was reflected in private inscriptions of earlier periods of political unrest, the distinction lies in the fact that ideal kingship was restored as the political situation was re-stabilized. This was not the case in the period here discussed. On the contrary, autobiographical inscriptions continue to express a marked determination to emphasize the official's autonomy of royal control, allowing any royal influence to fall in the background. These texts further highlight the officials' own part in specific achievements, such as guaranteeing the well-being of their towns, claiming the king's dependence upon their efforts, and even going so far as to use terminology drawn from royal inscriptions.²⁶⁴ One example is the biographical inscription of Peftuaneith from the reign of Amasis (570-526 BC) who was sent to Abydos to carry out the reconstruction of its temple and reorganize its revenues.²⁶⁵ Peftuaneith donated land and other revenues to the temple of Osiris to increase its income, and he rebuilt the House of Life after its ruin due to political unrest, thus, establishing "sustenance of Osiris." He further "suppressed crime in Tawer" and guarded it for its lord, as he "protected" all the people, and gave income from Tawer's desert to the temple so the "Abydenes would have burials" (lines 7-9). In short, Peftuaneith performed the part of the king who grants land and revenues, reinstalls order and protects his people. Another example is the inscription of Nesuhor,²⁶⁶ the viceroy of Kush, who prides himself on having prevented foreign mercenaries from

²⁶² This example is discussed in: Lloyd, "The Late Period: 664-323 BC," In *Ancient Egypt: A Social History*, 291.

²⁶³ Recent edition: J. F. Quack, *Studien zur Lehre für Merikara*. The text represents the advice of a FIP king to his son and successor Merikara. In his council are the customary aspects of kingship; i.e. enact justice, protect the people, and defend Egypt's borders, but he also stresses the notion that even a king will be judged for his actions after death. As the teaching progresses, it appears that the king himself has violated the gods for which he will have to answer: the cemetery of the sacred city of Abydos was desecrated during his authority.

²⁶⁴ Lloyd, "The Late Period: 664-323 BC," In *Ancient Egypt: A Social History*, 298.

²⁶⁵ Louvre A93: Publication: P. Pierret, *Recueil d'inscriptions inédites du Musée Égyptien du Louvre*, 39-41. Also: H. Brugsch, *Altaegyptischer Denkmäler. Bautexte und Inschriften*, 1252-54. Translation: Otto, *Die biographischen Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit: ihre geistesgeschichtliche und literarische Bedeutung*, 164-66. M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume III: The Late Period*, 34-6.

²⁶⁶ Publication: G. Maspero, "Notes sur quelques points de grammaire et d'histoire," *ZÄS* 22, (1884): 88ff; H. Brugsch, "Beiträge zu §LVII der vorstehenden Mittheilungen," *ZÄS* 22, (1884): 93-7. Translation: Otto, *Die biographischen*

deserting to Nubia during the reign of Apries (589-570 BC).²⁶⁷ The distinction in terms of rhetoric is striking; the king was in a state of fear, from which Nesuhor managed to relieve him through the god's help:

Let my name abide in your (i.e. the god's) house, let my Ka be remembered after my life, let my statue abide and my name endure upon it imperishable in your temple. For you (i.e. the gods) rescued me from an evil plight, from the mercenaries [Libyans (?)], Greeks, Asiatics, and foreigners, who had it in their hearts to [...], who had it in their hearts to go to Shas-heret. His Majesty feared because of the evil which they did. I re-established their heart in reason by advice, not permitting them to go to Nubia (t3-pd.t), (but) bringing them to the place where His Majesty was; and His Majesty executed their punishment.

Some officials even fail to mention the king in their inscriptions and solely ascribe their fortunes to the god. Petosiris, for example, the high priest of Thoth at Hermopolis Magna (between the 4th and 3rd century BC) left out any mention of the king when he praised the gods for his fortunes.²⁶⁸ In the same spirit, Wennefer, the royal scribe and prophet of Osiris in the Ptolemaic period, described on his inscription that when a "conspiracy" was made against him and he was tried before the king, he was exonerated exclusively due to the grace of the gods.²⁶⁹

The conception of royal fallibility established the major principle of historical causation.²⁷⁰ For example, the biographical inscription of Somtutefnakht (30th dynasty)²⁷¹ contains a definite implication that the defeat of Nectanebo II by the Persians was the result of divine hostility. This, in its own right, implies that Nectanebo himself was considered to have fallen from divine grace and was thus a king not in harmony with the divine will.²⁷² A later example that is very explicit on this doctrine is the *Demotic Chronicle* from the early Ptolemaic period, which consists of a series of oracles with their

Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit: ihre geistesgeschichtliche und literarische Bedeutung, 162-64. Present English translation in *ARE*, I, § 989-95.

²⁶⁷ The account of the mercenaries' desertion into Nubia is also attested in Herodotus, 2: 30, but here the ruling king is Psametik I (664-525 BC); cf. H. Schäfer, "Die Auswanderung der Krieger unter Psammetich I. und der Söldneraufstand in Elephantine unter Apries," *Klio* 4, (1904): 152-163; A. B. Lloyd, *Herodotus. Book II. Commentary* 1-98, 129-32.

²⁶⁸ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume III: The Late Period*, 44ff; Otto, *Die biographischen Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit: ihre geistesgeschichtliche und literarische Bedeutung*, 174ff. Tomb: G. Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris*.

²⁶⁹ Text: H. Brugsch, *Altaegyptische Inschriften. Mythologische Inschriften*, 741-43. Translation: Otto, *Die biographischen Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit: ihre geistesgeschichtliche und literarische Bedeutung*, 194-6; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume III: The Late Period*, 54-8.

²⁷⁰ Lloyd, "Nationalist Propaganda in Ptolemaic Egypt," 241ff; Lloyd, "The Late Period: 664-323 BC," In *Ancient Egypt: A Social History*, 299.

²⁷¹ Text: *Urk* II, 1-6. Translation: Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume III: The Late Period*, 41-45.

Lichtheim notes that no king is mentioned in the biography and that Somtutefnakht probably began his career under Nectanebo II (360-343 BC) then passed into the service of the Persians who re-conquered Egypt in 343 BC. He then witnessed, from the Persian side, the battles in which Alexander the Great defeated Darius III.

²⁷² Lloyd, "The Late Period: 664-323 BC," In *Ancient Egypt: A Social History*, 299.

interpretations relating to kings of Egypt from Amyrtaeus (c. 404-399) to Nectanebo II (c. 358-41).²⁷³ The texts theme is that only those kings who live in accordance with the will of the gods will prosper and it explains recent disasters in Egyptian history as illustrations of this principle. Accordingly, the concept of royal dependence evolved into a perception that the king could fail in the sight of heaven itself, and stand directly responsible for periods of disasters. The divine king as the provider of good fortune for private individuals falls in the background; *Gods* not *kings* are addressed as the sole responsible entities for these fortunes.²⁷⁴

(3.4) Kings in Middle and Late Egyptian Literary Traditions- From Khufu to the Anonymous King of Doomed Prince

The first story in the present discussion is the Middle Egyptian story of *Khufu's Court* (MK), which contains four stories about miracles performed by priests and magicians.²⁷⁵ In the text, each of these tales is told at the royal court of King Khufu of the 4th dynasty by his sons. The first three stories are set in the reigns of the king's predecessors; Djoser (2667-2648 BC), Nebka (2686-2667 BC), and Sneferu (2613-2589 BC).²⁷⁶ The forth story takes place during the reign of Khufu himself (2589-2566 BC) and is related to him by his son Hordjedef. Hordjedef, instead of telling a story from the past of which truth cannot be told from falsehood (6, 23- 24), tells his father about a true wonder in the form of the sage Djedi. Djedi who can reattach a severed head, tame a lion, and has secret knowledge about "the number of the secret chambers of the sanctuary of Thoth" is then brought to court.²⁷⁷ After performing one magic feat, Djedi prophesizes that Khufu's royal line will end through the birth of the three kings who will found the new dynasty, i.e. 5th dynasty. The setting then shifts to the birth of the three new kings by Ruddjedet at the house of a priest of Ra, her husband. Several deities associated with childbirth disguise themselves as musicians and assist at the birth of the three children, Userkaf

²⁷³ W. Spiegelberg, *Die sogenannte Demotische Chronik des Pap. 215 der Bibliothèque Nationale zu Paris nebst den auf der Rückseite des Papyrus stehenden Texten*. See also, J. Johnson, "The Demotic Chronicle as an Historical Source," *Enchoria* 4, (1974): 1-17; J. Johnson, "The Demotic Chronicle as a Statement of a Theory of Kingship," *JSSEA* 13, no. 2 (1983): 61-72; Lloyd, "Nationalist Propaganda in Ptolemaic Egypt," 33-55. See also, J. Kügler, "Propaganda oder performativer Sprechakt? Zur Pragmatik von Demotischer Chronik und Töpferorrakel," *GM* 142, (1994). The author disputes a propagandistic character of the Demotic Chronicle as seen by Lloyd and argues that prophesies have a performative character and are therefore not primarily explanatory texts; they create their own reality: in a time of foreign rule, the ancient authors wished to stabilize the traditional Egyptian identity by creating a world distinguishing foreign from native.

²⁷⁴ Fate is discussed in 61 with references on the concept in note 284.

²⁷⁵ References for text are in note 112.

²⁷⁶ For Hordjedef and Djedi see (2.4.1).

²⁷⁷ *tnw ipwt n.t wn.t n.t dhwtj*, which Khufu wanted to know. For interpreting the phrase as "fate," see: H. Goedicke, "Thoughts about the Papyrus Westcar," *ZAS* 120, (1993): 23-36. The author takes the direct genitives *nt wnt* "that what is" and *nt dhwtj* as parallel and separate qualifications of *ipwt* "length of life." Khufu would accordingly want to know the allotted fate designed at birth, or in other words the future.

(2494-2487 BC), Sahura (2487- 2475 BC), and Neferirkara (2475- 2455 BC), who are born with marks of divinity (their skin is gold, and their hair is lapis lazuli), and the birth goddesses decree their royal destiny. The story then brakes off as the maid of Rudjedet is eaten by a crocodile on her way to inform Khufu about the birth.

There have been numerous studies and interpretations of this narrative; some have focused on a coherent analysis of the entire composition,²⁷⁸ while others have focused on specific themes and motifs.²⁷⁹ According to the theme of this chapter I here focus on the portrayals of the kings in the story beginning with the character of Khufu, and offer my interpretation of the story as a whole.

Khufu's character has mainly been interpreted as the "bad" king of Egyptian literary tradition. This is chiefly based on the following facts: that he suggests a human being as the subject for Djedi's magic feat; that he fails to obtain an answer concerning the secret chambers of Thoth; and that Djedi prophesizes the end of his royal line. These are the factors I shall now address.

When Djedi was summoned to the court, Khufu called for a prisoner to be the subject of his magic performance of reattaching a decapitated head: "Let there be brought to me a prisoner who is in confinement, so that his harm (i.e. punishment) may be executed" (8, 16).²⁸⁰ Djedi, however, refuses to perform the magic on an human being, because its execution on a human being is forbidden, and a goose is brought to him instead (8, 17 ff.). Khufu's proposal to use a human being for Djedi's magic and his subsequent acceptance of Djedi's refusal have been understood as contradictory behavior: one action seems cruel while the other reveals acceptance of religious norms.²⁸¹ In this context, it should be noted that Khufu had explicitly asked for a prisoner in order to execute his "punishment;" he did not ask for just *any* human being. This suggests that the prisoner was sentenced to death and was

²⁷⁸ e.g.: Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 182-92: reads the text as a literary enactment of a pattern of doubt about the kingship of Khufu and a reaffirmation of the divine children who will be his successors; H. M. Hays, "The Historicity of Papyrus Westcar," *ZÄS* 129, (2002): 20-30: argues an intention to describe a situation where there is trouble in the state with respect to the attitude of its kings, but that piety (manifest in the devotion of a new royal line to cult in general) will resolve it; E. S. Meltzer, "The Art of the Storyteller in Papyrus Westcar: An Egyptian Mark Twain?," In *Essays in Egyptology in Honor of Hans Goedicke*, 169-175: focuses on the composition as a vehicle for recitation/performance by a skilled storyteller. For a survey of studies, see: Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 296.

²⁷⁹ E.g.: A. Spalinger, "Osiris, Re and Cheops," *ZÄS* 134, (2007): 173-84: on Hordjedef in his role as a key "intellectual"; J. McKeown, "The Symbolism of the djed-pillar in The Tale of King Khufu and the Magicians," *Trabajos de Egiptología* 1, (2002): 55-68: On "djed" in personal and place names and as a deliberate parallelism with the ceremony of 'raising the djed-pillar'; Eyre, "Yet again the Wax Crocodile: P. Westcar 3, 12 ff," 280-81: on the symbolism of the crocodile in the second tale.

²⁸⁰ *imi in.t(w) n=i hnri nty m hnr.t wdi nkn=f.*

²⁸¹ Lepper, *Untersuchungen zu pWestcar: eine philologische und literaturwissenschaftliche (Neu)-Analyse*, 95.

accordingly an appropriate subject for Djedi's magic.²⁸² There is no implication that the king as an executer of judgment on criminals is a cruel image. This image is paralleled in the 2nd story of the composition, set in the reign of Nebka (2686-2667 BC). Here, the magician Webaoner creates a wax crocodile, brings it to life, and makes it snatch the lover of his wife to the bottom of a lake. Webaoner returns to the lake with king Nebka and relates to him the crime that his wife and her lover had committed, i.e. adultery, and calls the crocodile up from the water with the lover still in its mouth. He then waits for Nebka's judgment; Nebka immediately orders the crocodile to devour the townsman once and for all and commands that Webaoner's adulterous wife be set on fire and thrown into the river (1, 18ff.).²⁸³ Khufu's judgment of the prisoner through an act of magic seems analogous to Nebka's judgment of his "prisoner" awaiting sentence in the crocodile's mouth. Both follow the ideal image of a king who does not accept mischief in his reign. Evaluating Khufu as a cruel character on the basis of judging a criminal is, in my opinion, unsupported. That Khufu accepts Djedi's refusal suggests that the king respected the religious norms advocated by Djedi, and at the same time it reveals Djedi's authority as an expert in ritual knowledge. This motif, therefore, does not necessarily create a bad image of Khufu.

Khufu became very sad when he heard of the end of his royal line, yet he expressed a wish to go "see" the temple of Ra lord of Sakhebu, the city where the new kings would be born. He then rewarded Djedi more generously than the magicians and kings of the past (9, 12 ff.), and their meeting was concluded. His desire to visit Sakhebu has been interpreted as an implicit intention to dispose of the newborn kings. Scholars have found grounds for this through the king's proposal of using a human being for Djedi's magic and the death of the maidservant on her way to inform Khufu about Ruddjedet's birth. As I have argued, decapitation of a prisoner does not place Khufu in a negative light. The death of the maidservant, however, could imply some plot in the narrative, but it does not necessarily imply Khufu's evil intentions. Khufu had generously rewarded Djedi, which suggests that the king had accepted and recognized the unavoidable aspect of the fate of his dynasty.²⁸⁴ The death of

²⁸² Wildung suggested that Khufu's order to perform the decapitation on a prisoner was an act of mercy since the prisoner would have received his life back if Djedi actually had performed his magic on him: D. Wildung, *Die Rolle ägyptischer Könige im Bewusstsein ihrer Nachwelt. Teil I: posthume Quellen über die Könige der ersten vier Dynastien*, 160.

²⁸³ Adultery is discussed in (5.7).

²⁸⁴ The Egyptians believed that, from the beginning of life, an individual was surrounded or assisted by powers that affected his destiny in many ways including the length of life and moment of death. Fate was conceptualized in the verb *š3i* and its derivatives, i.e. the noun *Shai*, and was connected to several goddesses such as Renenet, Meskhenet and the Seven Hathors. Studies on fate include: J. Quaegebeur, *Le dieu égyptien Shai dans la religion et l'onomastique*; J. Baines, "Contexts of Fate: Literature and Practical Religion," In *The Unbroken Reed: Studies in the Culture and Heritage of Ancient Egypt in Honour of A. F. Shore*, Baines builds upon previous work, especially that of Quaegebur. For a literary perspective, see: F. T. Miosi, "God, Fate and Free Will in Egyptian Wisdom Literature," In *Studies in Philology in Honour of Ronald James Williams: A Festschrift*. The author rejects the concept of fate as *predestination*

the maidservant could be another element of fate in the narrative with a completely different function in the story than an implication of the king's wicked intentions; such an interpretation rather reflect the modern reader's expectations of the narrative.²⁸⁵

Concerning the motif of Thoth's sanctuary, it has been argued that Khufu failed to gain esoteric religious information as a means of ridiculing the king.²⁸⁶ However, the notion of unattainable divine knowledge is paralleled in the Demotic *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* from the Ptolemaic period.²⁸⁷ Here, Khamwase unsuccessfully attempts to get hold of the sacred book of Thoth. The motifs in *Khufu's Court* and *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* are analogous in several aspects: first, there is the fact that both Khufu and Khamwase were royal figures who were in search for secret divine knowledge; second, that secret knowledge in both narratives concerned the god Thoth; third, skilled magicians, Djedi and Naneferkaptah, held that knowledge; fourth, both kings failed to gain that knowledge due to a distraction in their lives caused by these magicians: Djedi's prophesy about the end of the dynasty mislead Khufu's attention from the subject, while Naneferkaptah produced Khamwase's unreal experience with Tabubu, forcing Khamwase to recognize Naneferkaptah's powers and give up the book of Thoth. In this context, the "messages" in both motifs are multiple: on one hand, it reminds the audience that some sacred knowledge is meant to remain unattained even by kings. At the same time, it also reveals that those who hold the key to that knowledge are the skilled magicians (here Djedi and Naneferkaptah), enforcing the link between the skilled priest and the god of scripture. The durability of the motifs testifies to the permanence of these notions.

Finally, the prophecy of the end of Khufu's royal line has formed the basis for some scholars for reading his character as "bad." Some have argued that Khufu was already seen as a bad king when the text was composed, which was a contemporary (i.e. 12th dynasty) cultural interpretation of his pyramid complex and titles.²⁸⁸ The Greek traditions of Herodotus (2: 124-26), Diodorus (2: 64) and Manetho (*Aegyptiaca*, 46: 2), which all presented Khufu as a ruthless and blasphemous king was an additional

(kingship is an exception) and argues that man disposed of his own free will. Fate was thus limited to the length of life and death only. He sees that the concept of free will gave rise to the concern with "cause and effect" in man's way of life in wisdom literature of the Greco-Roman period where Fate as divinity is explicit as opposed to its abstract presence in earlier texts.

²⁸⁵ As Parkinson notes: "Perhaps the portrayal of King Herod in the New Testament influences the modern reader's expectations too much here (...)": Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 186, n. 56.

²⁸⁶ Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 186. It is also possible that the king was distracted by Djedi's prophesy, or that the passages were simply emended from this composition; Blackman, *The Story of King Kheops and the Magicians. Transcribed from Papyrus Westcar (Berlin Papyrus 3033)*, 11a n. 6b.

²⁸⁷ See discussion in chapter (2).

²⁸⁸ e.g., Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 184; M. Baud, "Une épithète de Rêdjedef et la prétendue tyrannie de Chéops. Études sur la statuaire de Rêdjedef, II," *BIFAO* 98, (1998): 15-30.

factor that further supported such interpretations of the king's reputation as evil.²⁸⁹ However, it seems unlikely to me that a culture in which monumental buildings formed an integral part of royal/religious customs should consider that Khufu's pyramid complex meant that he was a wicked ruler. The Greek historians, including Manetho, specifically described Khufu as a heretic and blasphemous king who insulted the gods and closed the temples so that he could support the building of his monuments: "for he shut up all the temples, and having first kept them (i.e. the people) from sacrificing there, he then bade all the Egyptians work for him" (Herodotus, 2:124). Manetho further related that Khufu's disrespect for the gods was so ample that he wrote a book on it (*Aegyptiaca*, 46: 2).²⁹⁰ This image of the king as a blasphemous and merciless king reflects an Hellenic, rather than a native Egyptian, interpretation of his character, influenced by the scale and size of Khufu's funerary monument, which presumably lead to a belief that he must have closed down the temples in order to force the entire country to work on such a tomb.²⁹¹ As Ryholt has shown, several texts from the Tebtunis temple library (2nd century AD) concern kings of the two earliest golden eras of Egyptian history (4th & 12th dynasties, and 18th & 19th dynasties).²⁹² Here, kings from these periods, including Khufu, were portrayed as rulers with prosperous reigns,²⁹³ because such accounts were substantiated by the wealth suggested by the kings' monuments. In this context, the traditions regarding Khufu in Greco-Roman Egypt reflect an Hellenic contra an indigenous cultural interpretation of the same monuments. One sees a ruthless and blasphemous king who forced his people to work on his funerary monuments, thus crippling the economy of Egypt, the other a successful king who brought wealth to the country, which made building the very same monuments possible. It is likely that just as the Egyptian tradition of the 2nd century AD recognized that a large monument did not correspond to tyrannical rule, 12th dynasty Egypt did as well, especially since pyramids were still being built in that period.

In my opinion, Khufu's character cannot be read as "positive" or "negative." Rather, his character reveals basic elements of royal behavior paralleled in several fictional narratives. One is the motif of entertainment at court, a common feature of courtly activity represented in narratives. For example, in the third tale of the composition, Sneferu was diverted through a boating trip with beautiful

²⁸⁹ For example: Erman, *Die Märchen des Papyrus Westcar*, 52 & 56.

²⁹⁰ cf. Wildung, *Die Rolle ägyptischer Könige im Bewusstsein ihrer Nachwelt. Teil I: posthume Quellen über die Könige der ersten vier Dynastien*, 152-92.; S. Morenz, "Traditionen um Cheops," *ZÄS* 97, (1971): 111-18.

²⁹¹ Ryholt, "Egyptian Historical Literature from the Greco-Roman Period," In *Das Ereignis: Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Vorfall und Befund*, 233.

²⁹² Ryholt, "Egyptian Historical Literature from the Greco-Roman Period," In *Das Ereignis: Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Vorfall und Befund*, 234-7.

²⁹³ An Inaros narrative (pCarlsberg 57 + P. CtYBR 298) includes: "---] king Khufu son of Mycerinus. He captured the chieftains [---", which Ryholt interprets as a description of a successful campaign through comparing the phraseology in the texts with a similar one concerning Amenemhet II: Ryholt, "Egyptian Historical Literature from the Greco-Roman Period," In *Das Ereignis: Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Vorfall und Befund*, 234.

women of his royal chambers (see below) because he was bored in his palace seeking distraction: “I have gone through every room of the palace to seek distraction for myself but I couldn’t find any.”²⁹⁴ In the same manner, king Amasis (570-526 BC) in *Amasis and the Sailor* (Ptolemaic period)²⁹⁵ was entertained with a story under the shade of a tree because he had a massive hangover.²⁹⁶ All these portrayals offer a perspective of a day in a king’s life that differs from the ideological theme of discourse.²⁹⁷ In fiction, the king is not in constant office securing the well-being of the cosmos through his earthly duties, as for example, Sesotris III in the Greater Semna stela, who does not sleep with a matter on his mind, speaks as he accomplishes and acts according to what his mind plans. The dichotomy lies in the portrayal of the active aspect of kingship in official royal representations and the reflection on its passive aspect in fictional narrative: One type of king is active, crossing borders and conquering foreign domains, the other is inactive remaining within Egypt’s borders being entertained in his palace. This aspect of courtly life is echoed in King Pepi II’s (2278-2184 BC) letter to his official Harkhuf where the king anxiously waits for his entertainment, a dancing dwarf from Nubia, to arrive.²⁹⁸ Pepi commanded:

*Come sailing north to the Residence at once! Cast off, bringing back with you this dwarf whom you have brought from the land of the horizondwellers, alive, prospering and healthy, for the god's dances in order to amuse (lit. “distract the heart” *shmh ib*) and delight (lit. “please the heart” *snh3h3 ib*) the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Neferkare, may he live forever.*²⁹⁹

Accordingly, the motifs discussed above are fictional representations of “pleasing the heart” of the king. The definition is paralleled in Sneferu’s excursion as having “pleased” (*nfr*) the king’s heart (5, 2-

²⁹⁴ 4, 25-5, 1: “Distraction” literally means “cooling matter” (*s.t kb.t*). For the noun as an expression for a mood “a refreshing experience, distraction”, see M. I. Toro Rueda, “Das Herz in der ägyptischen Literatur des zweiten Jahrtausends v. Chr: Untersuchungen zu Idiomatik und Metaphorik von Ausdrücken mit *ib* und *HAti*” (Georg-August Universität Göttingen, 2003), 257.

²⁹⁵ Text edition: Spiegelberg, *Die sogenannte Demotische Chronik des Pap. 215 der Bibliothèque Nationale zu Paris nebst den auf der Rückseite des Papyrus stehenden Texten*, 26 ff. Recent translation: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 450-52.

²⁹⁶ Literally “the beating he was under” (*t3 sty.t (r.)wn-n3.w iw=f n-im=f*), line 7.

²⁹⁷ Another example is Amenemhet I (1985- 1956 BC) in the Middle Egyptian story of *Sinuhe* who remained in his palace while his son, Senwosret I (1056-1911 BC) was at the battlefield (12-15). Several sources: date of composition is believed to be the first half of the 12th dynasty (after 1875 BC); the earliest surviving manuscript is from the reign of Amenemhet III (1831-1786 BC). Copies of the text show that it survived in the literary tradition of ancient Egypt for more than 750 years, cf. R. B. Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe and other Ancient Egyptian Poems, 1940-1640 BC*, 21. Recent text edition: R. Koch, *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe*, using the two principal sources (Berlin 3022 for the bulk of the text, and Berlin 10499, for the first section, missing in 3022. Translation: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 54-66. See also: Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe and other Ancient Egyptian Poems, 1940-1640 BC*, 21-53; Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 149-167, for translation and discussion of literary meaning, allusions, mythology etc.

²⁹⁸ *Urk. I*: 120-131. Translation: M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms*, 23-7.

²⁹⁹ 15-17: This translation in: Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 20.

15). Rather than a dancing dwarf, Sneferu had 20 women from the royal chambers accompany him on the boat trip. These women were most “beautiful in form” (*m nfr.wt nt ḥꜥ.w=sn*), with “firm breasts” (*bnt.tṯ ḥnṣk.yt*) and well-braided hair, dressed only in fishnet. In addition, the king specifically demanded that the women should not have “opened up by giving birth” (*n wpt=sn m mst*). These women, described as *nfr.wt* who have “not opened up by giving birth,” were presumably sexualized adolescents particularly known in depictions from Egypt from the 18th dynasty. All these girls are nude, or almost nude, and wear the heavy wigs associated with the erotic.³⁰⁰ Likely these women were intended eventually to fulfill the king’s sexual desire. This is not an improbable assumption since similar descriptions of beautiful women in fictional narratives often result in the arousal of the beholder. Comparative examples include: the woman with “braided hair” and “soft skin” who seduced the Herdsman in the Middle Egyptian *Tale of the Herdsman* (x+2-8),³⁰¹ the woman described as “more beautiful (*nfr.t*) in body than any woman in the entire land,” which the gods fashion for Bata in the Late Egyptian tale of *Two Brothers* (NK) whom Bata “desired” very much as soon as he saw her (9, 7-9); and finally, the episode in *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* (Ptolemaic) where Khamwase had seen the very beautiful Tabubu (*nṣ.w-ḥn=s m-šs* 4, 39) and was struck by her beauty to the extent that he actually threatened to rape her if she did not consent to having sex with him (5, 5). Sneferu’s boating trip has been interpreted in various ways,³⁰² but it should be kept in mind that our interpretation may go beyond the cultural premises of the Egyptian text. The passage presents the audience with an episode of a king’s life where the trip with the young women, including any sexual activity alluded to in the text, was simply what the text described: passing a pleasant day (*hrw nfr*, 6,13-14), which had a pleasant effect on the king’s heart.³⁰³

³⁰⁰ e.g.: ritual spoons shaped like youthful swimming females, and ritual spoons and ring bezels that show adolescent girls playing lutes. Their forms are also used as handles on mirrors and they appear as servant girls in tomb chapels. For *nfr(wt)* and the 18th dynasty figures, see: see also L. Green, “In Search of Ancient Egyptian Virgins: A Study in Comparative Values,” *JSSEA* 28, (2001): 90-98, for nubile females had not given birth in relation to age and sexual maturity. The author compares *nfr(wt)* with Greek parthenos in that both appear to designate a young woman who has not given birth; C. Graves-Brown, *Dancing for Hathor: Women in Ancient Egypt*, 53 ff. For the concept “virgins”, see note 692.

³⁰¹ pBerlin 3024: Composition date: 12th dynasty. Text: A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratische Papyrus aus den königlichen Museen zu Berlin V. Literarische Texte des Mittleren Reiches II. Die Erzählung des Sinuhe und die Hirtengeschichte*, 6, 15, pl. 16-17. Translation: Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe and other Ancient Egyptian Poems, 1940-1640 BC*, 187-8.

³⁰² For example, as sacrilegious in that Sneferu was likened to the son god sailing with Hathor: P. Derchain, “Snéfrout les Rameuses,” *RdE* 21, (1969): 19-25. On the other hand, Fischer established iconographic parallels for the episode seeing that the trappings of the activity were part of a well attested courtly ritual, rather than being usurped aspects of divinity: H.G. Fischer, “Some Iconographic and Literary Comparisons,” In *Fragen an die altägyptische Literatur: Studien zum Gedenken an Eberhard Otto*.

³⁰³ As Parkinson notes: carefree entertainment is a sign of leisurely glory: Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 184. For *hrw nfr* as courtly “holiday” cf. L. D. Morenz, “Ein hathorisches Kultlied und ein königlicher Archetyp des Alten Reiches - Sinuhe B 270 f. und eine Stele der späten XI. Dynastie (Louvre C 15),” *WdO* 28, (1997): 109. Sneferu also appears in the frame story of *Prophecy of Neferti* where he desires

As a whole, *Khufu's Court*, as Hays argued, may be read as a narrative that contrasts the kings of the dynasties of Khufu and his predecessors (Djoser, Nebka, Snefru) with the kings of the 5th Dynasty (Userkaf, Sahura, Neferirkara).³⁰⁴ Hays saw that the wonders (*bi3yt*) witnessed by the 4th dynasty kings were performed by magicians and respectively concerned: a settlement of domestic dispute, solving the distress of a royal mistress, and amusing the king with magic performance. Hays labeled these themes as “self-interested” pursuits, unrelated to the business of the state.³⁰⁵ He found that these aspects were contrasted in the description of the new line of kings: the *one* wonder performed for them demonstrates their filial relationship to the sun god, a divine proof of their legitimacy (three “crowns of the lord” were fashioned for them by the gods Ra, Isis, Nephthys, Meskhenet, Heqat, and Chnum themselves rather than by magicians). In contrast to the “old” kings, the sun god Ra foretells that the “new” kings will exercise kingship in the entire land, build temples for the gods, make sure that their altars are endowed, and their offering tables abundantly provided for, and that their divine offerings are multiplied (9, 23 ff.); i.e. promises, Hays argued, that reveal the special relationship between the new kings and cult in general. He accordingly ascribed a literary meaning to the text which was created through this contrast between the old line, frivolous and self-serving, and the new line, serious and properly in service to the gods. Hays’ conclusions are plausible especially with regards to the literary contrast that is in the text. From the same perspective, it is also worth noting the description of the new kings as they are born: each child is described as one cubit long, with firm bones, and limbs covered with gold wearing a headdress of real lapis lazuli, which certainly highlights the contrasts between the two dynasties.

However, Hays’ reading does not take into consideration that it was Hordjedef himself, Khufu’s son, who introduced the true wonder to his father through Djedi. This could be read in light of the

to listen to “perfect speech” (*md.t nfr.t*) and “elegant phrases” (*3s.w stp.w*) that may “please” (*d3y*) him. When the chief lector priest Neferti arrives, Snefru then reaches for his box of writing materials and takes a papyrus roll and a palette (*gsti*) in order to write down what Neferti says to him (lines 12-13). This portrayal of a literate royal figure is paralleled in the *Instruction of Merikara* and *Eloquent Peasant*. In the former text, the future king, to whom the text is addressed, is encouraged to exceed the abilities of his ancestors. In the latter, the king has all the peasant’s petitions recorded and read aloud at court for his pleasure. In fictional stories the king is entertained for the sake of amusement. Wisdom texts, on the other hand, imply an portray participation of the king in the production of this specific type of literature; Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt*, 82. For *Neferti* (1.2.2), with references. For *mdt nfr.t* “Perfect words,” an important skill in Middle Kingdom official life as the *Kultursprache* carrying the cultural values of the period cf. Moers, “Bei mir wird es Dir gut ergehen, denn Du wirst die Sprache Ägyptens hören!": Verschieden und doch gleich: Sprache als identitätsrelevanter Faktor im pharaonischen Ägypten,” In *Muster und Funktionen kultureller Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung: Beiträge zur internationalen Geschichte der sprachlichen und literarischen Emanzipation*, 59-80. See also discussion in Parkinson on the social and aesthetic aspects of perfection of speech: Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 118-28. For edition of *Merikare*: Quack, *Studien zur Lehre für Merikare*. For edition of *Eloquent Peasant*: R. B. Parkinson, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant: A Reader's Commentary*.

³⁰⁴ Following the interpretation of Hays, “The Historicity of Papyrus Westcar.”

³⁰⁵ Hays, “The Historicity of Papyrus Westcar,” 28.

author(s) being well aware that the king's epithet "son of Ra" began in the 4th dynasty,³⁰⁶ accordingly setting the prince in a "positive" light (a link between the 4th and 5th dynasties). Furthermore, interpreting the representations of all the "old" kings as pursuers of self-interest seems rather farfetched: for example, condemning a criminal suggests the opposite. Certainly, several episodes of the text allude to central cultural ideologies, such as the solar origin of kingship, and the notion of divine parentage presented as the birth of the 5th dynasty kings through Ra himself (employed by Hatshepsut for example).³⁰⁷ It also displays historical awareness through the association of the 5th dynasty with the cult of the Ra, which climaxed in this period. I do not exclusively subscribe to a specific reading of the text, but rather consider it as encompassing several layers of interpretations the most important of which is the sense of historicizing the past, while also presenting an aspect of royal life within its courtly setting.

Another royal activity within the borders of the palace is in the Middle Egyptian composition of *King Neferkara and General Saset* concerning king Pepi II of the 5th dynasty. Episodes of this tale are preserved on a fragmentary 25th dynasty papyrus from Thebes, a stone writing board from Deir el-Medina, and a 19th dynasty writing board of unknown provenance.³⁰⁸ The latter two only contain a few lines of the story but the texts altogether confirm that the story was well known for a good period of time.³⁰⁹

In the story the protagonist, the historical king Pepi II, has a sexual affair with his military commander, Saset. The sexual act is not overtly described, and the entire affair is twined in an atmosphere of secrecy, which is suggested by the circumstances under which the lovers meet: the king leaves the palace in the dark of the night, entirely alone without his entourage, and when he reaches the house of Saset, he stomps his foot and the general lowers a ladder to the king from his window. They spend time together during which the king does what he "desires" with the general and returns to his palace. The king's visits are described as an established "nightly" practice (pChassinat I, x+3, x+14).

As Richard Parkinson discusses,³¹⁰ the Middle Kingdom official discourse conformed sexual acts between men to the function of defiling enemies in which the defiled man was categorized as a "back-turner" (*hmyw*). The evidence suggests a differentiation between an active and passive role in the sexual act, where the passive role was despised as a sign of physical weakness and of abandoning a man's

³⁰⁶ For the epithet: O'Connor and Silverman, eds., *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, 71.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Text : (pChassinat I, oDeM 1214, OIC 13539): G. Posener, "Le conte de Néferkarê et du général Siséné (Recherches littéraires VI)," *RdE* 11 (1957): 119-37. Translation: R. B. Parkinson, *Voices from Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Middle Kingdom Writings*, 54-6. I follow Parkinson's dating of the composition to the Middle Kingdom (c. mid 12th dynasty): Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, 297.

³⁰⁹ R. B. Parkinson, "'Homosexual' Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature," *JEA* 81, (1995): 72.

³¹⁰ R. B. Parkinson, "'Homosexual' Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature," *JEA* 81, (1995).

proper gender role for a “womanly” one. In mythology, for instance, this is exemplified in the active role mostly connected to the ambivalent god Seth. In *Contendings of Horus and Seth*,³¹¹ Seth attempted to sodomize Horus after a banquet and claimed before the gods that he had done on him the “work of a male” (*k3t ḥ3wty*: 12, 3). Hearing this, the gods cried aloud and spewed and spat at Horus’s face (12,4). This reaction does not necessarily suggest that *homosexuality* had irregular overtones. In fact, the passage rather concerns a matter of power relations, dominance and aggression, where the aggressor imposes his dominance on his rival who becomes the defiled party.³¹²

As another example in his discussion on homosexuality, Parkinson further includes the 32nd maxim of *Teaching of the Ptahhotep*³¹³ stating: *imi=k nk ḥmt ḥrd rh.n=k ḥsf.t r mw ḥr ḥ3ti=f*. This passage is problematic and has been subject of various interpretations. Parkinson translates: “May you not have sex with (*nk*) a woman boy (*ḥm.t ḥrd*), for you know that what is opposed will be water upon his breast” (i.e. further stimulate his desires).³¹⁴ Kammerzel and Rueda translate: “Du sollst nicht einer Frau (oder) einem Kind beischlafen, (wenn) du den Widerstand gegen die Samenflüssigkeit (wörtl. Wasser) auf seiner (bzw. ihrer) Stirn erkannt hast,”³¹⁵ i.e. taking *ḥm.t ḥrd* as two separate nouns, understanding a notion of “resistance” in the noun *ḥsf.t* “punishment,” reading “water” as a metaphor for semen and reading *ḥ3ti* as “face” rather than “heart.” Parkinson’s translation does more justice to the text, without amending and reading beyond the original grammar. However, it is difficult to extract a concept of homosexuality or an attitude against it from this passage, because our understanding of *ḥm.t ḥrd* could be extremely subjective. Accordingly, it remains problematic to assign notions of homosexuality in our reading of these texts although certain attitudes and perceptions probably did exist as to what was socioculturally irregular sexual conduct.³¹⁶

There are two aspects to the story about king Pepi and general Saset which deserve attention. On one hand, although the text is very fragmentary, the relationship between the two characters implicates a scandalous behavior of which the king is aware, shown through the great secrecy of the

³¹¹ *LES*, 37-60. The text exists in different versions and dates back to the early Middle Kingdom with versions in all stages of Egyptian language. The text is translated and treated extensively in: Michèle B., *Mythe et roman en Égypte ancienne: les aventures d'Horus et Seth dans le papyrus Chester Beatty I*.

³¹² cf. H. P. Duerr, *Der Mythos vom Zivilisationsprozeß. Band 3: Obszönität und Gewalt*, §16, p. 242 ff. “Das »Ficken« von Feinden und Rivalen” discusses this aspect from an anthropological perspective.

³¹³ cf. note 95 for text references.

³¹⁴ Parkinson, “Homosexual’ Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature,” 68.

³¹⁵ F. Kammerzell and M. I. Toro Rueda, “Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers: die Zweiunddreißigste Maxime der Lehre des Ptahhotep,” *LingAeg* 11, (2003): 63-78.

³¹⁶ For example the “Negative confession” in *Book of the Dead* 125: “I did not have penetrative sex (*nk*) (with) a man on whom a sexual act is performed (*nkk(w)*) shows that that the practice did exist, but it does not concern homosexuality or homosexual desire. The example, again, reveals the notion of active and passive penetration. Text: E. Naville, *Das Ägyptische Totenbuch der XVIII. bis XX. Dynastie*, 302. Discussion of the active/passive role in the sexual act in this example: Parkinson, “Homosexual’ Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature,” 61.

affair that also instigates a man's following and observing the king's nightly visits (pChassinat I x+3, x+5-6), and the fact that the nocturnal trips have already become the object of rumor (pChassinat I x+3, x+4-5).³¹⁷ The story also concerns a "petitioner of Memphis" who attempts to speak before the court, but is drowned by the noise of the court musicians (pChassinat I, x+2, x+7-8). It has been suggested that the petitioner's appeal concerned a protest against the affair between the king and his general.³¹⁸ Perhaps too much plot is being read into the text here because the petitioner only discovered the affair when he had left the palace. He had heard about the rumor, but he only had it confirmed after his visit to the palace: "If it is so, then the rumors about him going out at night are true" (pChassinat x + 3, x+5). Accordingly, it is unlikely that the petitioner had initially gone to the palace to protest a conduct he only witnessed after he left it. Perhaps the secrecy of the king's escapades became a tool for the petitioner to force the king into hearing or responding to his unheard petition. At any rate, as Montserrat notes, the very limited evidence from Egypt suggest a view on sodomy as negative in the sense that it is non-reproductive, socially dangerous (like adultery) and, physically violent (about conquest: Seth and Horus).³¹⁹

Posener suggested that in particular Pepi's actions in the story here discussed imply that he was to be considered as one of the "bad" kings of literature,³²⁰ and Parkinson noted that the parodic tone that is entailed in the passages concerning the affair suggests that his homosexual relationship was object of amusement as well as scandal.³²¹ In this view, a similar spirit of mocking the monarch, is paralleled in the pornographic graffito found on the wall of a grotto not far from queen Hatshepsut's (NK: 18th Dynasty: c. 1473-58 BC) mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri. The graffito appears to depict the reigning queen (or simply a queen), nude and as the passive recipient of sexual advances. It was found among textual graffiti that stylistically date to about the same period of time.³²² The artist of the sketch, believed to be the author of a nearby inscription of a prayer, was interestingly a scribe attached to the construction work on the queen's temple.³²³ In the same grotto, another private individual wrote his name on the wall within a royal cartouche. As disrespectful as such graffiti may appear, it is possible that the lack of respect was not aimed at the office of kingship itself, but rather at the human element of the monarch. Other visitors to the grotto, which included priests as well, saw no reason to alter the

³¹⁷ Parkinson, "'Homosexual' Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature," 73.

³¹⁸ Posener, "Le conte de Néferkarê et du général Siséné (Recherches littéraires VI)," 128 note 11.

³¹⁹ D. Montserrat, *Sex and Society in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, 70.

³²⁰ Posener, "Le conte de Néferkarê et du général Siséné (Recherches littéraires VI)," 136.

³²¹ Parkinson, "'Homosexual' Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature," 75.

³²² E. Wente, "Some Graffiti from the Reign of Hatshepsut," *JNES* 43 no. 1 (1984). See also L. Manniche, "Some Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Sexual Life," *AcOr* 38, (1977): 21-22, fig. 4.

³²³ Wente, "Some Graffiti from the Reign of Hatshepsut," 48-52.

depiction of the queen, suggesting an acceptance of expressing satire,³²⁴ which would be paralleled in the fictional story about Pepi.

Kings are not only chasing desires in Middle and Late Egyptian narrative, they may also be experiencing grief as for example in the Late Egyptian tale of the *Doomed Prince* (NK).³²⁵ Here, the audience is presented with a more compassionate portrayal of a king. The narrative begins with introducing an unspecified king “to whom no son had ever been born” (*bn-pw=tw msy n=f s3 t3y*: 4, 1). The king implores the gods for a son and his wish is granted. Sadly, however, the king is told by the gods that his newborn prince is destined to die by a crocodile, a snake or a dog.³²⁶ Saddened by the news, the king decides to protect his son by placing him in a stone house in the desert, equipped with personnel and everything the prince might need, so that the prince should not venture outside the house. When the prince grows older and realizes that his fate is inescapable, he persuades his father to let him leave the protected house and go on an adventure to see the world. Suspenseful episodes are intertwined in the narrative during which the prince encounters his fates. He escapes the snake, but when he finally is faced with the crocodile and the dog, the text brakes and the destiny of the prince is unfortunately forever lost.

From the very beginning of the narrative, the audience is introduced to a king who has no male child. “*Once upon a time there was a king, so the story goes, to whom no son had ever been born*”. This introduction represents a motif that undoubtedly would have triggered an emotional effect in the audience. As have been stated earlier, audience’s schemata compensate for any gaps in the text with their knowledge, which is situational, historical and socio-culturally dependent. The audience would thus have filled the “gaps” in the description (i.e. what it means to have no son), with the socio-cultural references of the value of progeny, especially with regards to male offspring.

Ancient Egyptian material culture suggests that marriage only became meaningful once children were born,³²⁷ and references to the status of having a male child is found in most of the didactic literature of Egyptian culture well into the Roman period, which represent one individual category of literature that addresses codes of behavior and ethical values of the Egyptian society; a handing over of moral codes to the future generations.³²⁸

³²⁴ O'Connor and Silverman, eds., *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, 57.

³²⁵ Text: *LES*, 1-8 (13th century BC, Thebes); translation: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 75-9.

³²⁶ For references and comments on crocodiles and fate, see note 284.

³²⁷ C. Eyre, "The Evil Stepmother and the Rights of a Second Wife," *JEA* 93, (2007): 225.

³²⁸ A comprehensive study of this genre may be: H. Brunner, *Altägyptische Weisheit. Lehren für das Leben*. It includes an introduction to the genre (style and influence on other texts), its development in relation to Maat, and its view on man, god, and cult. See also: P. Vernus, *Sagesse de l'Égypte pharaonique*. For wisdom texts as codes of conduct see note 64.

What the wisdom texts explicitly convey is the significance of having a “son” while a man is still young and as soon as he is socially established and prosperous.³²⁹ The earliest example of this reference is preserved in *Instruction of Hordjedef*: “If you would be excellent, establish a household and acquire for yourself a caring wife; that a male child will be born to you” (maxim 1-2).³³⁰ Several hundred years later, the scribe Ani instructs his son to: “Take a wife while you are a young man so that she may produce a son for you. She should bear for you while you are still youthful. It is proper to produce people. Happy is the man whose progeny is many; he is congratulated on account of his children.”³³¹ And finally, more than a thousand years later, the *Instruction of Ankhsheshonq* (11, 7) states: “Take a wife when you are twenty years of age, so that you may have a son while you are still young.”³³²

Having a male child was crucial to the nucleus of the family because, ideally, the eldest son inherited his fathers’ office and the largest share of his parents’ inheritance as well.³³³ This arrangement was moreover in keeping with the son’s duty to care for and support his parents during old age and his responsibility for giving them a proper burial and maintaining their mortuary cult, both of which were necessary to ensure the parents’ afterlife.³³⁴

Albeit literature may implicate that childless individuals were considered socially lacking, it still advised not to regard it as disgrace or blessing, since a childless man may sometimes be more fortunate than one who has a large family: “Do not praise him who has no children. Neither speak ill or boast about it. For it is common that a father may be in misery. And as for a mother who has given birth, another may be happier than she. It is the lone man of whom God takes care” (*Ptahhotep*: maxim 9).³³⁵ The texts also advise men not to abandon their wives if they don’t bear children for them: “Do not abandon a woman of your house when she does not become pregnant or give birth” (*Ankhsheshonq*: 14,

³²⁹ On marriage and marriage contracts, see also section (5.4).

³³⁰ For text references, see note 173. This translation in: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 127.

³³¹ Text in several redactions; recent translation in: J. F. Quack, *Die Lehren des Ani: ein neuägyptischer Weisheitstext in seinem kulturellen Umfeld*. Present translation in: M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume II: The New Kingdom*, this maxim on p. 136. Entire text: 135-46.

³³² The primary manuscript, pBM 10508 derives from a priest’s burial in Akhmim and dates to the late Ptolemaic period. There are parallels to the instructions from the 2nd century BC till the 2nd century AD. pLouvre E 2414, P. inv. Sorbonne 1260, pCairo 30682, the unpublished pBerlin 15658; the frame story alone survives from the library of the temple of Tebtunis. pBM 10508: S. R. K. Glanville, *The Instructions of 'Onchsheshonqy* (*British Museum Papyrus 10508*). See also: F. Hoffmann and J. F. Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur. Münster*, translation: 273-99; a comprehensive bibliography for texts and editions is on p. 365-66. English translation: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 497-529. Present line on p. 510.

³³³ S. Lippert, “Law: Definitions and Codification,” In *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*. <http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz002bzzgj>

³³⁴ See e.g., E. Frood, “Social Structure and Daily Life: Pharaonic,” In *A Companion to Ancient Egypt. Volume 1*, especially pp. 471-4 on kinship and household with a comprehensive bibliography on p. 490.

³³⁵ Translation: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 134.

15). Both examples suggest an ideal literary norm of collective empathy towards childless couples, which, rather than divorce, encourages other solutions for childless couples. In real life, this may be paralleled with the possibility for a daughter or collateral (brother or uncle) to undertake the role of the oldest son if there was no son, if he was deemed unsuitable, or if circumstances favored other divisions.³³⁶ For example, parents could disinherit children as may be seen in the will of a woman Naunakhte from Deir el-Medina who excludes some of her children because they had neglected her.³³⁷ However, following these codes of conduct need not be the general case in real life: the scribe Nekhemmut from the Deir el-Medina was berated for being unable to make his wife pregnant by his fellow men: 'You are not a man since you are unable to make your wives pregnant like your fellow men.'³³⁸

In an invented world, on the other hand, the gods could bequeath pregnancy and solve the problem just as it was affirmed in maxim of Ptahhotep "It is the lone man of whom God takes care". Accordingly, when the king in *Doomed Prince* prays the gods of his time, asking for a son, his prayers are answered (4, 1-2) and his wife bears him a son. A similar motif of divine intervention for fertility is present in the Demotic story of *Khamwase and Siosiris*. In the story the couple, Khamwase and Meheweskhe are childless. Meheweskhe then spends the night in the temple court so that the gods may heal her of her barrenness. In the temple, while asleep, she receives a dream in which a message from the god is communicated to her with a prescription for a remedy that will ensure her pregnancy. She goes home and prepares the remedy and becomes pregnant on the same night with a male child, Siosiris.³³⁹ In both stories, a divine intervention causes the birth of the children. And in both stories the joy of receiving a firstborn son is contrasted by the grief caused by losing it. The king in *Doomed Prince* must adhere to the loss of his son through his three fates, while Khamwase must endure the death of his son, because he in reality was a reincarnation of an ancient magician who had come in the form of Siosiris to save Egypt from a foreign threat.³⁴⁰ Regrettably, the ending of the *Doomed Prince* is lost, but prince Khamwase is granted a new son by the gods to compensate for his loss and grief and it is very plausible that the doomed prince was similarly saved from his fates.

In both narratives, the fathers are portrayed as loving and protective of their children, showing great affection towards their sons. The king in *Doomed Prince* is completely heartbroken (*ib=f dw r-3t*) when he learns the fate of his son (4, 5) and desperately attempts to protect him by locking him up in

³³⁶ C. Eyre, "The Adoption Papyrus in Social Context," *JEA* 78, (1992): 215. See also: Eyre, "The Evil Stepmother and the Rights of a Second Wife," 234-5.

³³⁷ A. G. McDowell, *Village Life in Ancient Egypt: Laundry Lists and Love Songs*, 38-40.

³³⁸ oBerlin 10627: *KRI*, 6: 155-6; translation: Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 149.

³³⁹ For this motif and its connection to Imhotep, see (2.4.1).

³⁴⁰ For Siosiris as the reincarnation of Horus son of Pwensh, (2.5.4)

the stone house (4, 5-6), while Khamwase makes magical amulets for his wife as soon as he hears of her pregnancy to protect her and the child in her belly (1, 6). Since newborns were especially vulnerable to any number of natural risks; parents would take advantage of every means possible to ensure the infant's survival into childhood. In this framework, Khamwase's action may be understood as an appeal to the divine world to maximize the chances of a successful conception and a safe pregnancy, which leads to the birth of a healthy child.³⁴¹ A parallel motif of fatherly love is exposed when the king in *Doomed Prince* is unable to deny his son's requests for a dog, the very same animal destined to kill his son. The king decides to grant the prince a puppy instead, hoping that it might be a safer solution, while simultaneously sparing his son the grief (*bgs*, 4, 10) of denying his request. He reveals the same empathy when he, being well aware that he might not see his son again, sends him off to have his adventure. The entire scene echoes the theme of acknowledging a child's adulthood and permitting it to find its own path in life- as the prince wisely reminds his father; fate is inescapable and will find him wherever he goes (4, 12-13) and the king is obliged to let go of his only son. Although for a different reason, Khamwase is also deprived of his only child, causing great grief for his heart. In a very emotional scene we learn that Khamwase lets out a great cry (*sgp* 3) as his son suddenly vanishes from sight and, although he is well aware that he is the incarnation of Horus son of Pwensh, he suffers great pain for his loss and never neglects his cult (7, 7-11).

Doomed Prince and *Khamwase and Siosiris* are centuries apart. They undoubtedly are different in nature and content- the theme in *Doomed Prince* echoes that of the *Tale of Sinhue*, centering on the Egyptian "abroad" motif, while attention is given to the concept of Fate, whereas the Khamwase story belongs to the genre concerning the exploits of famous historical priests.³⁴² However, the motifs of the torments of childlessness, the fatherly love and compassion, and the loss of the firstborn child- through death or through the child's reaching of adulthood, were recognizable concerns of society, as they are to us today, which unquestionably engaged the audience of the stories emotionally as they relate to these issues.

The beginning line of *Doomed Prince* immediately positions the king in opposition to his ideal image: a king without a male child is contrasted to the image of a potent king surrounded by all his offspring, as for example in *Sinhue* where all the royal children of king Senwosret I are brought before him in the palace as they receive Sinuhe. The king in *Doomed Prince* is a lonely king begging the gods for a son and when finally his wishes are granted, fate steps in and attempts to deprive him of his joy. Many children in real life would have died from attacks by dogs, snakes or crocodiles, in other words

³⁴¹ For the relationship of giving birth with the divine, see: K. Szpakowska, "Religion in Society: Pharaonic," In *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, 507-25.

³⁴² For the abroad motif see discussion of Gerald Moers' contextualization of the texts in (1.2.4), with references.

by “fate,” and the king in our story is, in a very short passage, subject to the same threats and torments of life recognizable by any Egyptian: the agony of being childless, the joy of receiving a son, and the threats that surround the safe-being of that child, a constant distress for a parent, who in the end must acknowledge his helplessness against *Fate*.

To sum up, Middle and Late Egyptian traditions, with only a few exceptions (e.g. *Sinuhe*) portray kingship from a courtly perspective. The main focus of this setting is the king’s engagement in what is pleasing for his heart: listening to stories, going on boating trips and so on. This does not necessarily imply that these kings were portrayed as bad, at least not explicitly. This aspect of fictional narratives is contrasted to a different setting in Demotic literary tradition where kings become subject to explicit categorizations of their character.

(3.5) Kings in Demotic Literary Traditions - From Sasobek to Necho I

As mentioned in the introduction to the present chapter, a gradual change in the concept of kingship takes root from the late Saite period onwards, where disorder and fragmentation of central authority demolished the aura of godhead surrounding the king and brought him nearer to the mortals and the moral code which applied to them. In fictional narratives of this period, the weakness of the royal image presents itself in explicit categorizations of kings as greedy, ill, or incompetent. Within the first category are king Sasobek from *Sasobek and Merira* (7th century BC),³⁴³ and king Amasis in *Amasis and the Sailor* from the Ptolemaic period.³⁴⁴ Amasis ruled during the 26th dynasty (570-526 BC).

In the beginning of *Sasobek and Merira* the audience are provided with a description of the king: “Pharaoh did not reserve from eating food in the evening, because pharaoh was very greedy (lit. his eyes were very big).”³⁴⁵ One night he suddenly becomes ill and all his magicians fail to find a cure for him. His magicians declare that his illness has not occurred since the time of his predecessor, and that he only has seven days to live. They inform him that only Merira can descend to the underworld and ask for a prolongation of his life (Merira is discussed in (2.4.3).

The name of Sasobek’s predecessor in the story is either Djedkara (^r*Dd¹-k3-R3*)³⁴⁶ or Menkaura (^r*Mn¹-k3(w)-R3*)³⁴⁷ (1, 6-7). If Menkaura (OK 4th dynasty) is the correct reading, Herodotus’ account

³⁴³ References for text in note 196.

³⁴⁴ References for text in note 295.

³⁴⁵ 1, 1-3: *bw ir Pr-3* (c.w.s) *hwš r wnm k.w m grh iw n3-3 ir.t n Pr-3* (c.w.s.) *m-šs*

³⁴⁶ For Djedkara: Posener, *Le Papyrus Vandier*, 5-21; U. Verhoeven, "Erneut der Name des früheren Königs in der Erzählung des Papyrus Vandier (recto 1,6)," *CdE* 72, (1997): 5-9.

³⁴⁷ So F. Kammerzell, "Die Nacht zum Tage machen. pVandier Rto. 1, 2-7 und Herodot II 133," *GM* 96, (1987): 45. See also: R. Jasnow, "A note on Pharaoh SA-Sbk in Papyrus Vandier," *Enchoria* 23, (1996): 179.179.

that an oracle came to Menkaura from the city of Buto, announcing that he had just six years to live and was to die in the seventh (2: 133) could have been inspired from a narrative tradition as that in *Sasobek and Merira*. In this context, the similarities in the motifs in *Sasobek* and Herodotus are noteworthy because both portray the kings seeking pleasure in life through worldly goods. Accordingly, when Menkaura heard the news about his future death, he:

knew that his doom was fixed. Therefore, he had many lamps made, and would light these at nightfall and drink and enjoy himself, not letting up day or night, roaming to the marsh country and the groves and wherever he heard of the likeliest places of pleasure.
(Herodotus, 2: 133)

The portrayals of Sasobek and Menkaure inevitably bring to mind, the depiction of Amasis in *Amasis and the Sailor* where the king has an unquenchable craving (*sgyg*) for a vat of Egyptian wine (*klby*: c. 12 liters). Amasis' council advises the king that drinking such amounts of wine is a very hard task (*n3.w-nht.t*: 2), but he ignores these warnings. Amasis then has a banquet as he sails on the river while his women surround him, drinks all the wine then goes to sleep under a tree facing the north but is unable to wake up in the morning to perform his duties because of his massive hangover (lit. the beating he was under: *t3 sty.t (r.)wn-n3.w iw=f n-im=f*: 4-7).

As I have argued, images of a king indulging in courtly pleasures are not necessarily negative portrayals of a king and have a long tradition in Egyptian narratives; it is, essentially, the overtly expressed attitudes towards the king (and his behavior) in the stories that are unparalleled in Middle and Late Egyptian literarily traditions. In *Amasis*, the king's behavior was ill regarded by his council who wonder whether such a thing could truly happen to a king: "The council lamented: 'is it a thing that can happen? It's happened that Pharaoh has a terrible hangover?'"³⁴⁸ In *Sasobek*, the story begins with a classification of the king as greedy. These images would have reminded the audience of the cultural attitudes towards such behavior as for example expressed in *Ankhseshonq* "do not be greedy (*ʃf*), lest you be insulted" (21, 15). This theme is recurrent in earlier teachings as well, including the Middle Egyptian *Teaching of Vizier Kagemni* (1, 4-7),³⁴⁹ where gluttony is despicable (*hw pw ʃf*) and looked upon with disgust (lit. "one points one's finger at it"), where restraint is better than greed (*nhy n ktt idn wr*) and a greedy man with a greedy gut (*hnty n ht*) is said to be a cowardly being (*hs*). Greed is also warned against in *Ptahhotep* as the root of everything evil:

Guard yourself against the blemish of greediness (ʿwn-ib "plunder of heart"), for it is a grave affliction of an incurable disease (mr.t n(t) bṭw), and those who fall into it cannot recover. It

³⁴⁸ 8-9: *ir n3 sre.w šlly dd in md(.t) iw=s rh hpr t3y hpr=f Pr-ʃ3 ir sty.t m-šs?*

³⁴⁹ pPrisse: Gardiner, "The Instruction Addressed to Kagemni and his Brethren."

creates dissention (ssby) among fathers, mothers, and maternal brothers; it embitters (sdhr) beloved friends; it alienates (sw3i) a trustworthy man from his lord; it isolates (nš) a wife from her husband. It is an embracing of every evil (bin.t nb.t); it is a combining of everything which is hateful (hbd.t nb.t) (...) for the greedy (ʿwn-ib) there will be no tomb" (Maxim 19).³⁵⁰

Arguably, *Ankhseshonq*, *Ptahhotep* and *Kagemni* do not directly relate to royal individuals. However, I apply these examples to demonstrate that greed has a long tradition in teachings as a shameful and immoral feature of character, with evil consequences. At the same time, since my argument is that the king was perceived as fallible, as any human, that perception applied to him as well. Accordingly, I understand that references to immoral nature in the beginning of the stories would have triggered an expectation that the kings' behavior would have consequences in the stories; an expectation which agrees with the notion that the king could fail in the sight of the gods and be subject to their judgment. This agrees with the subsequent part of the stories. In *Sasobek and Merira* (4, 16ff.) the negative character of the king is reinforced through his treacherous behavior towards Merira. The king had made an oath to Merira that Henutnofret, Merira's wife, would remain in her status as his wife, that he would defend her against anyone as if she were his own wife, and that he himself would not even look at her.³⁵¹ Merira then dies in order to plea for the king's life in the underworld, but the king nonetheless kills Merira's son, takes over his property, and makes Henutnofret his own royal wife. Merira discovers in the underworld, through the goddess Hathor, that the king's magicians had influenced Sasobek's actions. He then fashions a man out of clay, brings him to life, and instructs him to go to Sasobek and have him burn his magicians, because he had "violated" (*rwh*) his oath. At night, the king wakes up in a start, without his attendants being near him. He sees Merira's creature before him and is unable to utter a sound. The creature passes Merira's instructions to the king and the latter promises to do as told and subsequently the magicians are burned. The following parts of the manuscript are too fragmented, but at some point, Merira is together with his wife again (9, 5).³⁵² The contrast to Middle and Late Egyptian narrative portrayals of kingship lies in the fact that Sasobek was subject to a magician's reprimands. Through his magic creature, Merira had disciplined the king and made him correct his wrongdoing. In a similar manner, in *Blinding of Paraoh* (2nd Century AD) the king is punished by the gods with blindness

³⁵⁰ This translation: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 138.

³⁵¹ The motif is discussed in §(5.5)

³⁵² For comparison of Merira's creature with the golem in Jewish folklore cf. E. Brunner-Traut, "Die Magier Merirê und sein Golem," *Fabula* 31, (1990): 11-16; E. Brunner-Traut, "Ein Golem in der ägyptischen Literatur," *SAK* 16, (1989): 21-6.

and only after making great offerings to the gods, he is informed by an oracle that he can be healed through the tears of a virtuous woman.³⁵³

All together, the attitudes that are expressed in the above-mentioned stories is that Sasobek and Amasis had behaved inappropriately, and it is possible that just as Sasobek and the king in *Blinding of Pharaoh*, were taught a lesson, Amasis was told a story under the shade of the tree that in some way or other related to his behavior.

The image of Amasis' alcohol abuse is also attested in Herodotus' account about this king in Book 2: 173:

In the morning, until the the hour when the marketplace filled, he readily conducted whatever business was brought to him; the rest of the day, he drank and joked at the expense of his companions and was idle and playful. But this displeased his friends, who admonished him thus: "O King, you do not conduct yourself well by indulging too much in vulgarity. You, a celebrated man, ought to conduct your business throughout the day, sitting on a celebrated throne; and thus the Egyptians would know that they are governed by a great man, and you would be better spoken of; as it is, what you do is by no means kingly."

The Greek and Egyptian portrayals are roughly from the same time period and clearly share a common origin, but they differ in that the Greek sources on Amasis' as a whole place him in a positive light. The In the Greek depictions the king, nevertheless, manages to perform his duties, and he is revealed as a wise and favorable king. In Herodotus, he replies that: "Men that have bows string them when they must use them, and unstring them when they have used them; were bows kept strung forever, they would break, and so could not be used when needed. Such, too, is the nature of man. Were one to be always at serious work and not permit oneself a bit of relaxation, he would go mad or idiotic before he knew it; I am well aware of that, and give each of the two its turn." (Herodotus, 2: 173). This is contrasted by his portrayal in the Egyptian story, where he is unable to perform his duties causing the lament and wonder of his council. The Greek portrayal of the king is probably more reflective of his popularity due to his philhellenic policy, which made a profound impression on Greek historical consciousness that assimilated and embroidered more material concerning that king than any other.³⁵⁴

³⁵³ See (2.4.3) which discusses this motif and its reception in the Greek histories.

³⁵⁴ Lloyd, "The Late Period: 664-323 BC," In *Ancient Egypt: A Social History*, 296. For the motif as an Egyptian origin, see A. B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II. Commentary* 99-182, 213.

It is therefore more likely that a Greek cultural negotiation of the image of Amasis took place, resulting in this positive characterization.

The assessments of the kings' characters in the above-mentioned stories present a complete reversal of the motif of the righteous king in, for example the Middle Egyptian *Khufus' Court*. Here, king Nebka exercises his authority as a judge of character, and condemns the betraying wife of Webaofer and her lover. In *Sasobek*, on the contrary, the king himself is exposed as subject to judgment and reprimands. This judgment comes in the form of an agent of the divine sphere, namely the magician priest Merira. He was the only man who could plea for a prolongation of Sasobek's life, and later he was also the individual who reprimanded the king, both of which imply an implicit warning against offending the divine (including its servants). The reciprocal relationship between king and god is broken, and the king is presented as a man responsible for his own actions in the eye of god and man.

As mentioned above, officials' accounts become more self-centered, directing the kingship ideology toward reality and moving the authority of the king to the background (3.3) The king has now become more of a political figure, who must exercise his power in accordance with the will of the gods in order to prosper and gain support, rather than a divine figure in constant affiliation with the gods. This notion naturally leaves the king's nature receptive to assessment and criticism; this was particularly the case for the historical king Petubastis who was a ruler from Tanis in the Delta in the 7th century BC.³⁵⁵

Petubastis was one of the rulers who pledged allegiance to Assurbanipal (668-27 BC) during the Assyrian occupation of Egypt and he is the subject of much reproach in the Inaros Cycle.³⁵⁶ He is the ruling pharaoh in *Contest for the Benefice of Amon* (=Benefice 1st century BC), *Contest for the Armor of Inaros* (=Armor, 2nd Century AD), and *King Wenamun and the Kingdom of Libyan* (=Wenamun, 2nd Century AD), where he is contemporary with King Wenamun of Natho.³⁵⁷ In *Armor* and *Benefice*, Petubastis constantly fails to sustain his obligations to the gods: in *Benefice*, the Barque of Amon is hijacked during his reign, while in *Armor* the ceremonies of the Navigation of Osiris are not properly conducted. These stories have several historical functions; they form illustrious (fictitious) examples for the disorder that may erupt when a king neglects his obligations towards the gods; they historically place Petubastis as a failing king and attribute chaos to his reign; they form the heroic literature of Greco-Roman Egypt, honoring the historical warrior heroes Inaros and his clan as those who restored order in history (Discussed in detail (4).

³⁵⁵ cf. (4.4), on the rulers of the Saite period and the Assyrian invasion.

³⁵⁶ The cycle is discussed in detail in (4.4)

³⁵⁷ This story shows that both Petubastis of Tanis, and Wenamun of Natho were contemporary local rulers holding the title of "king", just as it was described in the Annals of Ashurbanipal. For the Saite rulers and the Annals, see (4.4).

Petubastis is the royal figure who is subject to most critique in the extant Demotic narratives. One opinion about the king was stated by one of the great warriors, Petechns, who was the son of Inaros' closest ally Pekrur. Here, Anchor (Petubastis' son) and Wertiamonniut are captured by 13 herdsmen who had formed an alliance with the rebellious priest. The priest had stolen the Barque of Amun because he felt entitled to the stipend of Amon, which Petubastis had instead assigned to his own son. Petubastis then sends a letter asking for Petechns' help, and the latter reacts as follows:

He heard all the words, which it contained (i.e. the letter). He raged (ḥ3r) like the sea. He fumed with rage (lit. gsm: "fume" and ḥny.t: "incense") as he said:

'That fish catcher (ḥm ḥlh) of a man from Tanis, pit of wrs-plant (hyt gp n wrs) of a man from Dep, Petubastis son of Anchhor, whom I cannot call "King" (bn-pw=y dd n=f pr-ʿ3). He honors me (only) when he seeks me in his misfortune (s3-thyt.t). When he goes to celebrate the festivals of his gods, without there being war and strife against him, he never sends for me. I swear in the name of Sopdu, the Great of the East, my God: had not the Chief of the East, my father Pekrur, mentioned in that letter (the name of) Amon, the great God in the west of Upper Egypt, who is across from Thebes, one would not have let it (i.e. the letter) cross to Thebes (i.e. where Petechns is), and I would never have had to fight for the children of Tahor, daughter of Patjenef. But I do not want to be subject to the disgust of Amon against me (i.e. if he doesn't fight). My brothers (?) (and) my 56 (?) men of the East! My eight [priestly] colleagues [get on board]!' So they prepared their] arms (i.e. for the trip to the) south of Thebes.

(Benefice: 13, 12-24)

Aside from the obscure swearwords, which clearly are less than flattering, Petubastis is also described as a ruler unable to take up his own fights and even his right to the title "king" is questioned. Furthermore, Petechns clearly states that the sole reason for his voyage to aid the king is the fear of disrespecting the god. Accordingly, the king, again, falls in the background, and the direct link between man and the god is stressed. Such proclamations and manner of addressing a king is unmatched in Middle and Late Egyptian narratives. A contrast may be offered, for example, in *Sinuhe* where Sinuhe had prostrated himself and touched the ground even before the king's letter was read to him (200).³⁵⁸

³⁵⁸ Translation, Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 62.

Another attitude towards king Petubastis is expressed by Pemu, the son of Inaros, who takes credit for the military success against the Assyrians during Petubastis' reign:

Pemu said: 'Woe and misery! By Re-Horakhte, the Chief of the Gods, the Great God! [pharaoh] Petubastis on the [...] when the chief of Ashur Esarhaddon son of S[ennacherib] came] to take Egypt from pharaoh Petubastis, I jumped in [--- / ---], I made very much bloodbath (ḥ3) and destruction (why). I caused him to return to the east'
(*Armor*: 5, 9-6)³⁵⁹

Accordingly, the tradition here ascribed the Assyrians' retreat from Egypt to Pemu, i.e. the Inaros clan and not to king Petubastis. Both sources (*Benefice* and *Armor*) portray the king's weakness as a warrior, which is further substantiated by his constant pleas in the stories to avoid war during his reign: e.g., *Armor*. 8, 6: "My son Pemu, Do not let war and strife occur in Egypt in my time" (also *Armor* 23, 12). This portrayal entirely shatters his image compared with, for example, king Senwosret in *Sinuhe* who is described as the one who prevails over all lands as a conquering Horus. Petubastis' helplessness against the outbursts and insults of the people around him: rebellious priests and autonomous warriors, completely dissolves his image as a divine king on his throne sustaining order and governance. Consider Sinuhe's conduct before king Senwosret at court:

I found His Majesty upon the Great Throne set in a recess (paneled) with fine gold. As I was stretched out on my belly, I lost consciousness in his presence. This God addressed me in a friendly way, and I was like a man caught by nightfall. My soul fled and my body shook. My heart was not in my body: I could not tell life from death."
(*Sinuhe*, 252f.)³⁶⁰

In contrast, consider the warrior Pekrur addressing Petubastis at court:

Pharaoh will recognize (who is) the strong(est: d3ly) among us (...) I have made an effort not to let war and strife occur during the time of pharaoh, but since pharaoh has violated me (ḥwy), I

³⁵⁹ This translation in: Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A Survey of the Narrative Source Material," In *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, 495. Readings and restorations: F. Hoffmann, *Der Kampf um den Panzer des Inaros. Studien zum P. Krall und seiner Stellung innerhalb des Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus*, 163-6.

³⁶⁰ Translation: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 64.

shall cause pharaoh to witness the battle between the two shields (i.e. opposing clans) and you will witness what will happen: you will see the two mountains tremble, [you will see] the sky thrown down to earth, and its manner of quaking it (i.e. the earth). You will witness the bulls of the people of Persopdu, the lions of the people of Metelis, and their combat skills. The cold iron; we shall cause that it burns! (i.e. the iron of weapons will burn through clashing).
*(Armor: 9, 12-20)*³⁶¹

The focus in the episodes described above is on the king's attributes as a warrior, which Petubastis completely lacks. Many of the heroes in the Inaros Cycle had originally formed allegiance with the Assyrians, including Necho I, Pekrur, and Petubastis. The negative portrayal of Petubastis can therefore not be explained as a reaction to his historical alliance with the enemy; otherwise Pekrur and Necho I would also have been portrayed in the same light. On the contrary, the narratives in the Inaros Cycle focus on one sole aspect of the king's nature, namely his lack of warrior skill and his cowardice. Why it was mainly he who had gained this reputation is unknown, because not much historical material survives concerning this king. At any rate, two literary traditions concerning Petubastis are evident: he was not favored by the gods because he neglected their cult, which resulted in the havoc in Egypt during his reign and that he was unable to control this chaos because he was not skilled as a warrior.

In absolute contrast to Petubastis is the portrayal of king Necho I (c. 672-664 BC) of Sais. He was the son of Tefnakht and father of Psametik I of Sais (664- 610 BC) founder of the 26th dynasty.³⁶² When Assurbanipal led his first campaign against the Kushite ruler Taharqa (667 BC), Necho I had lost his royal title, which was entrusted to him by Essarhadon four years earlier because he had formed an allegiance with the Kushite ruler that resulted in his captivity in Niniveh. In order to win the support of the Saite power, the Assyrian king Assurbanipal concluded a treaty with Necho I (and other local rulers) and re-instated him as "king of Memphis and Sais." His son, Psamtik I, was put in charge of Athribis. Shortly after, Necho I died in combat when he went to war against Taharqa's successor, Tanutamun, when the latter had launched a campaign to re-conquer Egypt.³⁶³

³⁶¹ Philological treatment of the passage: Hoffmann, *Der Kampf um den Panzer des Inaros. Studien zum P. Krall und seiner Stellung innerhalb des Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus*, 216-21.

³⁶² Not much is known about Tefnakht. For the name "Necho son of Tefnakht" see: K. Ryholt, "King Necho I Son of King Tefnakhte II," In *Von Theben nach Giza: Festmischzellen für Stefan Grunert zum 65. Geburtstag*. see also: O. Perdu, "De Stéphinatès à Néchao ou les débuts de la XXVI^e dynastie," *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 146, (2002): Tefnakht: 1230-3; Necho 1234-9.

³⁶³ A. Spalinger, "Psammetichus, King of Egypt, I," *JARCE* 13, (1976): 133-7.

Necho I's son Psamtik I (664–10) was the restorer of national unity.³⁶⁴ Assyria was facing difficulties from Babylon and Elam and later also internal problems, which made it possible for Psamtik to re-conquer Egypt in an unprecedented reunification of Egypt since the second millennium BC. He initiated the Saite dynasty with substantial administrative reforms among which was linking the provinces tightly to central government, and changing the status of their governors as its agents directly dependent upon it.³⁶⁵ A central feature of his rule was his military achievements, establishing a massive recruitment of foreign troops.³⁶⁶ He also boosted the economy, encouraging many Greek settlers to establish colonies in Egypt (Diodorus, 1: 66),³⁶⁷ and initiated major architectural programs throughout Egypt, including substantial improvements in many temples.³⁶⁸ His attention to sanctuaries was accompanied by a real involvement in religious life which is seen in the measures he took at Memphis on behalf of the Apis bull,³⁶⁹ his supervising the obsequies, and installing a new area for their burial; a devoutness towards the Apis that was maintained by his successors.

Accordingly, Necho I stands in the middle of three generations of warriors. Here lies the difference between him and Petubastis: Necho I was the father of the one warrior who liberated Egypt and was benevolent towards its gods, accordingly, conforming to the expectations concerning kingship. This is probably the background against which he stands as a great king in the Demotic narratives. In the Inaros Cycle, he occurs as a contemporary to Inaros and engages in military activities with Inaros himself. Among these stories are the *Inaros Epic*,³⁷⁰ and a yet unpublished story featuring Inaros and

³⁶⁴ He initially went into exile when the Kushites returned to Egypt under Tanutamun. But Assurbanipal sent his forces to retake Memphis and Thebes liberating the north from Kushite influence and causing Tanutamun to retreat. Psamtik's position was restored at Sais in return for his allegiance to Assyria: *ibid.*

³⁶⁵ O. Perdu, "Documents relatifs aux gouverneurs du Delta au début de la XXVI^e dynastie," *RdE* 57 (2006): 153-86.

³⁶⁶ He focused on the frontiers: Nubia, Libya, and Asia; reinforced military bases at the south of Elephantine, at Marea, and near the mouth of the Pelusiac Branch of the Nile at Daphnae. He recruited foreign troops with strong martial skills, including Greeks and Phoenecians; a foreign legion was integrated into the national army as an elite corps: Spalinger, "Psammetichus, King of Egypt, I," 138; P-M. Chevereau, *Prosopographie des cadres militaires égyptiens de la Basse Époque: carrières militaires et carrières sacerdotales en Égypte du XI^e au II^e siècle avant J.C.*, 311-7.

³⁶⁷ On the foreign policy of the first kings of the 26th dynasty where Psamtik I and his successor Necho II practiced a form of imperialism by establishing a system of vassal states in the southern Levant with the help of Greek mercenaries for the first time since the New Kingdom cf. B. U. Schipper, "Egyptian Imperialism after the New Kingdom: the 26th Dynasty and the Southern Levant," In *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature. Proceedings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3-7 May 2009*, 268-90; B. U. Schipper, "Egypt and the Kingdom of Judah under Josiah and Jehoiakim," *Tel Aviv* 37, no. 2 (2010): 200-226.

³⁶⁸ e.g., Tell el-Balamun, Busiris, Tanis, Heliopolis, Memphis, Esna, Elkab, and Edfu: O. Perdu, "Psammétique I^{er} restaurateur de l'unité nationale et initiateur du nouveau saïte," *Égypte Afrique & Orient* 28, (2003): 3-11.

³⁶⁹ O. Perdu, "Les stèles du Sérapéum et l'histoire dynastique," in *Tanis: L'or des pharaons* (Paris: 1987), 152-62.

³⁷⁰ pCarlsberg 68+123 + P. Tebt. Tait 1, pCarlsberg 80, pCarlsberg 164: Unpublished, for preliminary remarks, see Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A Survey of the Narrative Source Material," In *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, 492ff. See also section (4.4.1) for the extant Inaros texts.

Necho I, which is among one of the longest stories of the cycle with over 500 fragments.³⁷¹ He is further mentioned in *Armor, Bes Story*,³⁷² and *Castration Story*³⁷³ and several unpublished stories that do not belong to the Inaros Cycle including *Story Featuring King Necho Merneith*.³⁷⁴ In the stories, he is referred to as Necho Merneith (Necho beloved of Neith), Necho, or Merneith and his name is not always preceded by the royal title “pharaoh.”³⁷⁵

In *Castration Story* the audience is presented with the following image of a confident king, sitting on a gold throne with a gold scepter in his hand as two lions sit by his sides (compare the example of Senwosret and Sinuhe given above). Enraged by bad news delivered to him, his cry is like a raging sea that even startles the lions next to him, causing them to jump up and turn over the throne:

The moment when Pharaoh heard these things (regarding) the servant, he [opened] his mouth to the ground in a great flood of a cry. He threw forth the sceptre of gold which [was] in his hand. He got up from the gold throne. The lions turned over the throne which was [beneath] him as he said “Woe and Misery, Woe and Misery! May this young warrior perish (...)”
(*Castration Story*, frg. C3, 3-7)

Another passage in the narrative mentions Nubians, Syrians, Persians and Indians and images of gods. This is probably the well known motif of returning stolen images of the gods to their respective temples in Egypt, which here ascribes such actions to Necho I. An analogous motif is extant in *Djoser and Imhotep*, where Djoser embarks on a campaign in Assyria in order to retrieve the images of the gods that the Assyrians had taken from Egypt.³⁷⁶

Unfortunately many of the stories featuring Necho I are either unpublished or too fragmented to establish a coherent image concerning his portrayal. But the historical background against which he stands, the renown of his kin, all together place him as a celebrated king and warrior of Egypt’s past. His involvement in the war against the Kushites is perhaps also remembered through the stories including one featuring Necho I, Inaros, and Kushite magicians (pCarlsberg 75 +465),³⁷⁷ and *Bes Story*

³⁷¹ The majority of fragments of this narrative are in the Vitelli papyrological Institute in Florence (Psi. inv. D66), which have been identified by myself and Kim Ryholt, and will be published by myself in the near future.

³⁷² pCarlsberg 205: Hoffmann and Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur. Münster*, 55-9.

³⁷³ pCarlsberg 448: R. Salim, “Story of Crime and Castration (Papyrus Carlsberg 448)” (Masters thesis, University of Copenhagen, 2008).

³⁷⁴ Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 120.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ For *Djoser and Imhotep* and the motif of returning sacred objects to Egypt, see (2.4.1).

³⁷⁷ cf. Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 7, 41, 112 and 134.

in which a war against the Nubians occurs in his time. The former could have a similar motif to that in *Khamwase and Siosiris* where a Nubian magician threatens the safety of Egypt, or to that in *Djoser and Imhotep* where part of the war motifs against the Assyrians also involve duels against their magicians. Until further publications materialize, the image so far gained from these narratives is that Necho I was a very popular king who had played an essential role with Inaros in subjugating Egypt's enemies. The Tebtunis material seems to confirm that stories about him were favorable, at least, in the Fayoum region in Roman Egypt. He appears to belong to a dynasty of kings, favored in the demotic tradition which is echoed in the portrayal of his successor Necho II (Nechepsos) as a skilled magician and astrologer (see §(2.4.1) and (4.3.2))

(3.6) Conclusion

In conclusion, fictional narratives of ancient Egypt was a literary area in which the nature of kingship could be explored. As long as the motifs did not concern the ruling king, this area was clear for such explorations.

Middle and New Kingdom literary traditions were more focused on portraying the courtly aspect of kingship which takes place within the borders of the country. Here, different aspects of the human king were portrayed: he could be judging criminals, sailing on a boat, engaging in sexual adventures, or the subject of the agony of fate. These aspects of kingship could be understood within a framework of the cultural principles of the time, raising subjects such as Maat, Fate, and Righteousness within which intertextuality formed an essential referential background for the audience.

The literary tradition turns to one specific focus observed from the Saite period onwards, which is the complete humanization of the king, subjecting him to evaluation from god as well as man. In this tradition, the narrative setting turns towards the king outside the royal court within the sphere of the divine (in maintaining the cult of the gods) and within the sphere of military achievement (in subjugating Egypt's enemies). Accordingly, Demotic narratives present an explicit attitude as to who were beneficent and inefficient kings, providing examples (even if we should regard them as fictitious) of the chaos that may ensue when kings fail to carry out their responsibilities towards the gods. These stories were also sources for many details about various kings preserved in the Greek histories. At the same time, the Greek sources exhibit cultural evaluations of the Egyptian motifs, resulting in different attitudes or interpretations of the same source. Examples include Amasis and the *Blinding of Pharaoh*. Another example not mentioned here is king Senwosret who seems to have been greatly celebrated in

Greek sources, placing him on a par with Alexander the Great, but he is only attested (so far) in one Demotic manuscript from Greco-Roman Egypt.³⁷⁸

In contrast to Middle and Late Egyptian literary traditions, Demotic tradition is more focused on the function of narratives as historical sources, defining Egyptian history and evaluating its historical kings. At the same time, the value of the priests as mediators between kings and gods, as seen in for example *Merira and Siosiris*, form literary examples of the power of the priests. Priests are now saving the king from the Nubians, the very same Nubians whom king Senwosret III many centuries earlier characterized as “falling at a word,” and priests are now negotiating with the gods on the length of the king’s life. This is paralleled in the autobiographies from this period, where officials also emphasize their own influence in solving problems and restoring order, using phraseologies that echo royal inscriptions. The narrative examples, along with the temple origins of many of these texts, substantiate the role of this stratum of society in the creation of the literature in which they are the ones maintaining order, thus exalting their influences and authority. Allegedly, even Alexander the Great remembered Plato’s words, that in Egypt it is not possible for a king to rule without the priests’ support.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁸ cf. K. Ryholt, “A Sesostri Story in Demotic Egyptian and Demotic Literary Exercises (O. Leipzig UB 2217),” In *Honi soit qui mal y pense: Studien zum pharaonischen, griechisch-römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Ehren von Heinz-Josef Thissen*. As mentioned, Ryholt is in the process of a study on Egyptian kings and literary tradition, where he also considers the literary tradition of Alexander Imitatio in the representations of the kings.

³⁷⁹ A. Fildes and J. Fletcher, *Alexander the Great: Son of the Gods*, 54.

(4) Literary Negotiation: The Inaros Cycle in Context

(4.1) Introduction

From the Ptolemaic Period onward, Egypt may be classified as a truly multicultural society. Greek had become the main administrative language, and the Hellenistic culture was dominant in several parts of the country.³⁸⁰ Scholars attempting to historically contextualize the literary traditions of fictional narratives of this period (and all other periods for that matter) face the hard task of shaping an overall picture from material that is unevenly spread in time and space. In addition to this circumstance, there is the material which is still unpublished in collections around the world or still lies undiscovered beneath the sands of Egypt. At the same time, only a few publications have studied themes and motifs in the extant Demotic stories from the Greco-Roman period³⁸¹ and even fewer have considered the stories as a group within a contemporary historical context.³⁸² The endeavor for many Demotists has been more focused on publishing the texts, concentrating on philological considerations and excluding thematic discussions to some extent. Another problem in this context is the delimitation of the literary studies to either the Demotic or the Greek manuscripts with a lack of communication between the two domains.³⁸³ The stories of Greco-Roman Egypt should not be studied as *Egyptian* or *Hellenistic*³⁸⁴ literature but rather alongside a frame of reference which takes both sides into consideration, because a negotiation between the two may present itself as an amalgamation of literary traditions. Such developments are inevitable in a multicultural period with Hellenistic culture coexisting with the Egyptian culture for almost a millennium.

³⁸⁰ Examples are the *poleis*: Alexandria, Naukratis, Ptolomais, Antinoöpolis, and their capitals *metropoleis* and some of their surrounding villages, cf. (4.3) below.

³⁸¹ Genre: Tait, "Demotic Literature: Forms and Genres," In *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, 175-87. Motifs: Jasnow, "'And Pharaoh Laughed ...': Reflections on Humor in Setne 1 and Late Period Egyptian Literature," 62-81. R. Jasnow, "'Through Demotic Eyes': On style and Description in Demotic Narratives," In *The Archaeology and Art of Ancient Egypt: Essays in Honor of David B. O'Connor*, 433-48. J. Tait, "Anger and Agency: The Role of the Emotions in Demotic and Earlier Narratives," In *'Being in Ancient Egypt': Thoughts on Agency, Materiality and Cognition. Proceedings of the Seminar Held in Copenhagen, September 29 - 20, 2006*, 75-82.

³⁸² Among the exceptions: Ryholt, "Egyptian Historical Literature from the Greco-Roman Period," In *Das Ereignis: Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Vorfall und Befund*, 231-3. The author provides a survey of Demotic historical literature and suggests that extant large-scale monuments, especially those containing descriptions of military campaigns, were the primary factor in deciding what kings entered the literary tradition.

³⁸³ An excellent example of comparative and intertextual literary study is R. Jasnow, "The Greek Alexander Romance and Demotic Egyptian Literature," *JNES* 56 (2), (1997): 95-103. Jasnow suggests that the Nectanebo episode in the Greek *Alexander Romance* reflects native Demotic traditions about Alexander and Nectanebo, and that the work, in part at least, is a translation from an Egyptian text, incorporated in the text in its earliest stage. This he achieves through discussing motifs and phraseology.

³⁸⁴ i.e. Demotic and Greek stories found in Egypt perceived as a product of either one or the other culture without keeping an open mind to the possibility of cultural exchange through, for example, motif transference.

One unique aspect of Demotic fictional narratives found in temple context from the period here discussed is that they exclusively concern Egyptian historical figures. Of these stories, the Inaros Cycle appears to have been one of the most popular cycles of stories, and manuscripts containing “new” legendary accounts about the warrior prince of Athribis and his clan are still being discovered among the unpublished papyri in collections around the world. The cycle is exceptional in being a type of narrative which is unparalleled in earlier Egyptian literary traditions. It is set in the 7th century BC, during the Assyrian invasion of Egypt and the stories solely concern the exploits of princes and their clans during that period. Scholars are still debating today about the audience of these stories, and on whether the cycle was influenced by Homer’s epic poems, or developed from an earlier indigenous tradition.³⁸⁵

From a contemporary Hellenistic perspective, some observations can be made with regards to these stories: do they represent isolated local traditions? If not, where and when do these traditions occur and are there any particular features in these stories that made them popular? The assumption that the Demotic stories were a product of the priestly literate elite, as with most Egyptian literature,³⁸⁶ can hardly be rejected, but in Roman Egypt, from which many Demotic stories survive, Egyptian writing was almost entirely confined to the temple, whereas Greek was the *lingua franca* and had been so for centuries. Contrary to this circumstance, very few examples imply that Egyptian was taught to the Greek speaking class. One instance is a Greek papyrus of unknown provenance from around the 2nd century BC³⁸⁷ which suggests that a Greek speaking individual was learning “the Egyptian letters” in order to be able to teach them to Greek speaking slaves so that they could work at an Egyptian physician’s establishment. Accordingly, Egyptian could, in some cases, be learned (at least in Ptolemaic Egypt), but many Greeks would have known Egyptian, to some extent at least, through socio-cultural mobility, i.e. intermarriages, everyday life and so on, and surviving literature, historical and fictional, does reveal that a cross-cultural exchange of traditions did indeed take root in Hellenistic Egypt. In such a society of Hellenistic and Egyptian identities coexisting, can the audience for these stories be located outside the temple walls?

Considering that the authors of the stories were bilingual, especially in Roman Egypt, it is curious that hardly any Greek words are found in the Demotic stories, as opposed to say medico-magical texts, which contain translations and reading instructions in both languages. Does this suggest a deliberate

³⁸⁵ The cycle is discussed in detail in (4.4)

³⁸⁶ Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt*, 35. See also §2 & 3.

³⁸⁷ UPZ I.148; R. Rémondon, “Problèmes du bilinguisme dans l’Égypte lagide (U.P.Z. I, 148),” *CdE* 39, (1964): 126-46. The text is discussed below.

omission of Greek and that the audience of the stories was thus strictly *Egyptian*, whereas the medico-magical texts were philologically adjusted to suit utilization outside the temple?

Prior to an attempt to respond to such questions, it is essential first to address the cultural background in which these stories were composed. The Ptolemaic and Roman rules were different in several ways. While the former made room for a *Helleno-Egyptian* socio-cultural exchange, especially among the elite classes, the latter disrupted this process by a policy, which only benefited the *Helleno-Roman* class and any individual, who *felt* Hellenic or a combination of both Hellenic and Egyptian fell under the lower rank within the social hierarchy: *Egyptian* (*Agyptioi*). Hellenic ties and status thus become of great value in the Roman period, a fact which is also reflected in the archeological evidence.

The present chapter will first discuss the historical contexts of the Inaros stories. It will then address the notion of Hellenism in Egypt in order to gain a better understanding of the cultural surrounding in which the demotic stories were composed. The next section considers the question of socio-cultural exchange: it first discusses the portrayal of the Egyptian priesthood in Greco-Roman literary traditions followed by a discussion of the transference of Egyptian cultural values into an Hellenic context. The cycle of Inaros stories is then introduced, and the question of the stories' "genre" and Homeric influence is then discussed from the perspective of previous scholarship. A literary analysis of the texts as a whole is then presented and the framework of the stories is identified through considerations such as motifs and themes. Finally, the stories are paralleled with epic literary traditions, especially Homer, in order to gain a better understanding of the compositions as a whole and the questions of audience and purpose will be addressed.

(4.2) Historical Context

The Ptolemaic rule over Egypt was substantially different from the subsequent Roman occupation. The main feature that distinguishes the two periods is the continuation of Egyptian traditions by the former, while the latter significantly rearranged it, especially with regards to the Egyptian priesthood.³⁸⁸

When the Ptolemies succeeded Alexander the Great, they sought the favor and support of the Egyptian priesthood, as the Ptolemies saw their goodwill as the key to the acquiescence of the Egyptian population.³⁸⁹ In this quid pro quo system, the Egyptian priesthood retained its former influence

³⁸⁸ See details in (4.3.1)

³⁸⁹ For the Ptolemaic Period in general, see for example: K. Vandenbroucke, "The Ptolemaic Period," In *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, 159-79. Administration and politics, e.g. C. Préaux, *Les Grecs en Égypte d'après les archives de Zénon*. G. Hölbl, *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches: Politik, Ideologie und religiöse Kultur von Alexander dem Großen bis zur römischen Eroberung*. English translation of Hölbl, G. Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*. See also: S. A. Ashton, "The Ptolemaic Royal Image and the Egyptian Tradition," In *"Never Had the Like Occurred": Egypt's View of*

figuring as an essential organ supporting the new rule. This agreement between the two powers is manifest in the frequent rebuilding and enhancement of ancient temples under the Ptolemies and the revival and completion of building programs, which had been interrupted by the Persian occupation. The Ptolemaic rule was thus affirming that it continued ruling the country according to the traditions of Egypt, a fact that is well illustrated in the maintenance of the shrine of Nectanebo II, the last native ruler of Egypt (360-343 BC), in the major temple of Horus at Edfu.³⁹⁰

Under the Ptolemies, the priesthood enjoyed frequent tax exemptions bestowed upon their temples and they, in return, composed and erected decrees exalting the new rulers of the country for their exemplary conduct promising them the “blessing” of the gods and success in their future endeavors. Accordingly, when the Ptolemies ruled Egypt, the temples continued their ancient function as the power houses of Egypt: the boundary between the human and the divine in which the king, through his deputy, the local high priest, conducted the critical rituals of maintenance for the gods, and the gods in turn channeled their life-giving power through the king into Egypt.³⁹¹

Aside from being cult centers, the temples of Egypt were important economic bases whose resources were provided by the produce of the land ceded to them by the king. The temple land was part of the remitted land of the kingdom.³⁹² This remitted land included a number of categories: Land held by *kleruchs* (*klerouchike ge*), who were Hellenic citizens who received an allotment of land in a conquered country to which they migrated without loss of citizenship. Such parcels could be found throughout the country and consisted of: allotments (*kleroi*) assigned to soldiers in return for military service as required;³⁹³ land held in gift, which was assigned to servants of the crown as a stipend for exercising government office; “private” land, which was held by “private” individuals, i.e. landholding based on a contract. A final category of city land was assigned to the small number of Greek-style cities (*polis*). These cities, Alexandria, Ptolemais and Naukratis, enjoyed an autonomous status with their own laws, councils, and citizenship. However, many aspects of the individual developments in these cities

its Past, 213-24. L. Koenen, "The Ptolemaic King as Religious Figure," In *Images and Ideologies: Self-definition in the Hellenistic World*, 25-115.

³⁹⁰ See, e.g.: M. Alliot, *Le culte d'Horus à Edfou au temps des Ptolémées*.

³⁹¹ For literature on pharaonic kingship in general, see note 252.

³⁹² To avoid expropriating land from Egyptians, Ptolemy I began land reclamation in the desert fringe areas of the Fayum depression in the Arsinoite Nome. About forty settlements of the Graeco-Roman Period in the Fayum are known from archaeological remains: P. Davoli, *L'archeologia urbana nel Fayyum di età ellenistica e romana*. But 200 place names are known from the written sources that are still unidentified: K. Mueller, "Mastering Matrices and Clusters: Locating Graeco-Roman Settlements in the Meris of Herakleides (Fayum/Egypt) by Monte-Carlo-Simulation," *APF* 49, (2003): 218-54.

³⁹³ *Klerouchoi*: F. Uebel, "Die Kleruchen Ägyptens unter den ersten sechs Ptolemäern" (1968). E. Van't Dack, "Sur l'évolution des institutions militaires lagides," In *Armées et fiscalité dans le monde antique. Actes du colloque national, Paris, 14-16 Octobre 1976*, 77-105. J. Serrata, "Warfare and the State," In *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare I: Greece, the Hellenistic World and the Rise of Rome*, 461-97.

are still unclear.³⁹⁴ In this socio-economic structure, the indigenous Egyptians had the opportunity to become part of the privileged class, through, for example, tax exemptions for the priesthood, attaining Hellenic citizenship through social mobility, such as intermarriages and name changing.

The Memphite priesthood was the supreme pontiff residing in the ancient capital of Egypt and particularly important to the Ptolemies.³⁹⁵ On a general level, much was done to ensure their support, which is indicated in the well known expressions of priestly gratitude in the numerous decrees issued particularly in the first half of the Ptolemaic period, confirming the significance of the priesthood to the ruling power and vice versa.³⁹⁶

The earliest of these decrees, the Satrap Stela (311 BC, *Urk.* II, 11-22), explicitly expresses the quid pro quo attitude of the priesthood of Buto in the Delta towards the new ruling power. This theme is already attested in the Old Kingdom decree of Pepi I who grants immunity from all taxation to the mortuary chapel of his mother at the temple of Min in Coptos (*URK* I, 214)³⁹⁷ and in the New Kingdom dedication inscription of Seti I in the Temple of Wadi Mia where the king is assured a perpetual supply of gold for his mortuary temple at Abydos because he had a well dug and a temple built in the eastern desert where expeditions came through to quarry gold and building stones (*KRI* I, 65-70).³⁹⁸

The Satrap Stela differs from the earlier sources in explicitly portraying the Egyptian priesthood as educators for Ptolemy (I), which is expressed by his desire to gain knowledge of the Egyptian ways of life. The priesthood of Buto then explains the evil deeds of the enemy, the Persian King (Xerxes) who had seized the property of the temple and had its sacred images and scrolls taken away from Egypt and brought to Asia. Having heard this, Ptolemy requests:

Inform me (imm rh=i) about the (divine) wrath (b3w) of the gods of Pe and Dep, how they dealt with the enemy (hrw) because of the evil (dw) deed that he had done!

(Urk. II: 17, 9-10) ³⁹⁹

³⁹⁴ A. B. Lloyd, "The Ptolemaic Period " In *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 410-11.

³⁹⁵ See for example; D. J. Crawford, Quaegebeur, J., and Clarysse, W., *Studies on Ptolemaic Memphis*.

³⁹⁶ The Canopus Decree (217 BC): W. Spiegelberg, *Der demotische Text der Priesterdekrete von Kanopus und Memphis (Rosettana) mit den hieroglyphischen und griechischen Fassungen und deutscher Übersetzung nebst demotischem Glossar*, 3-37 and 66-76. The Raphia Decree (217 BC): H-J. Thissen, *Studien zum Raphiadekret*. The Memphis Decree (196 BC): Spiegelberg, *Der demotische Text der Priesterdekrete von Kanopus und Memphis (Rosettana) mit den hieroglyphischen und griechischen Fassungen und deutscher Übersetzung nebst demotischem Glossar*, 38-65 and 77-86. The Second Decree of Philae (186 BC) see, R. S. Simpson, *Demotic Grammar in the Ptolemaic Sacerdotal Decrees*, 5. The First Decree of Philae (184 BC): W. M. Müller, *Egyptological Researches III: The Bilingual Decrees of Philae*, 31-56, pls. 13-19.

³⁹⁷ Translation in : Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms*, 28.

³⁹⁸ Translation in: Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume II: The New Kingdom*, 52-6.

³⁹⁹ Translation follows: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 293-7, this passage on p. 395.

The priests then explain that the wrath of the gods was manifested through king Khababash who, not only had expelled the Persian king from the palace along with his son, but also returned all the sacred images of the gods that were transported to Asia back to Egypt. Subsequently, Ptolemy asks the priesthood to be shown the path of life (*w3ḥ*), which a king follows so that he may live by it (*ʕnh=i hr=s*, *Urk.* II: 18, 11-12). Once more Ptolemy explicitly expresses his will to adopt the Egyptian customs for which the priesthood operates as an informative source:

Let your majesty command to give back the northern marshland, whose name is The Land of Wadjet, to the gods of Pe and Dep, including its bread, beer, oxen, fowl, and every good thing. Let its renewal (wḥm sm3.w=f) be heralded in your name (hr rn=k) regarding its donation (drp) to the gods of Pe and Dep a second time in exchange for (m-isw n lit. as payment for) making your deeds successful.

(*Urk.* II: 18, 17-19, 2)⁴⁰⁰

The Satrap stele thus serves as the model for the path of life, which the Ptolemaic dynasty should follow, and according to the decrees, they did. The decrees further reveal a great interest from the Ptolemies to keep the priests on their side. The Canopus Decree celebrates king Ptolemy III's donations to the temples, increasing the number of priestly phylai, returning sacred object from Asia to the temples, remitting taxes, as well as importing grain from abroad during a year of low inundation. It further declares the deceased princess Berenike a goddess and creates her cult. The Memphis decree describes the royal protection of, and concessions to, the temples. It establishes the cult of Ptolemy V, and recalls how he had presented gifts of silver, grain to the temples and had the excess waters dammed for the benefit of the farmers during a year of a high Nile flood. The decrees thus emphasize that the Ptolemies are willing to preserve the traditional royal "way of life," which guaranteed an unchanged ideological and economical status for the temples and their priests.

Intertextually, the Ptolemaic decrees also contain an ideology that becomes a recurring theme in Demotic narrative tradition: returning sacred objects that had previously been removed from their sacred locations to the temple. An example is *Djoser and Imhotep*, I have discussed on several occasions, which specifically concerns the king's campaign in Assyria to bring back Egyptian sacred objects. The foreign rulers in such stories are normally humiliatingly defeated and the objects are subsequently

⁴⁰⁰ Following translation in: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 395.

returned to the Egypt. Other texts include the *Inaros Epic* (unpublished), and possibly also *Castration Story*.⁴⁰¹

The Ptolemies naturally had a political agenda: ensuring that the highest power associated with royalty is well endowed. The priesthood confirmed this authority, yet kept reminding the new rulers of the punishment of the gods if anyone insults their domains.

While the country seems at peace and the priesthood pleased during the reigns of the first Ptolemies, things were taking a drastic political change by the time the Memphis decree had been installed (2nd century BC) and Rome was increasingly exercising its authority on the Ptolemaic rulers. On an imperial level the country was weakened by dynastic division, which had taken its root and become a recurring ingredient in Ptolemaic politics. The ministers had enormous influence and were manipulating government, and in the South a native revolt led to the establishment of an independent state in the Thebaid which lasted from 200 until 186 BC.⁴⁰² In the North, Ptolemy IV and his wife had been assassinated in a palace coup at Alexandria, and the young Ptolemy V was installed in power. The Alexandrians revolted, headed by the military governor Cleopemus himself. The minister was killed and his family who had taken refuge in a temple were dragged out and publicly killed:⁴⁰³

All of them were handed over together to the mob, and some began to bite them, others to stab them, others to gouge out their eyes. As soon as any of them fell, the body was torn limb from limb until they had mutilated them all; for the savagery of the Egyptians is truly appalling when their passions are aroused.

*(Polybius, 15:33)*⁴⁰⁴

Although Polybius' (200-118 BC) account reflects his stereotyping of the Egyptians as "savages," and may not be entirely accurate, the account nevertheless suggests that some frustration among the people was present in Alexandria. Polybius was a Roman envoy sent to Alexandria in 180 BC and his

⁴⁰¹ See (3.5)

⁴⁰² For this aspect of the Ptolemaic dynasty, see: M. Depauw, "Egyptianizing the Chancellery During the Great Theban Revolt (205-186 BC): A New Study of Limestone Tablet Cairo 38258," *SAK*, (2006): 77-105. Hölbl, *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches: Politik, Ideologie und religiöse Kultur von Alexander dem Großen bis zur römischen Eroberung*. B. C. McGing, *Revolt Egyptian Style. Internal Opposition to Ptolemaic Rule*. P. W. Pestman, "Haronnophris and Chaonnophris," In *Hundred-Gated Thebes: Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period*, 101-37.

⁴⁰³ I. Scott-Kilvert and F. W. Walbank, eds., *Polybius: The Rise of the Roman Empire*, 484.

⁴⁰⁴ *LCL* 159, vol. 4.

description was recorded not long after the event.⁴⁰⁵ The “Egyptians” he mentions were probably native as well as Hellenic, and presumably also consisted of other ethnic minorities, who in Roman eyes all went under one and the same ethnic category. At any rate, the episode does exhibit the political autonomy of the Alexandrians, which they completely lost under Roman rule as a reprimand for interrupting the peace on this specific occasion, and several others (see below).

On an international level, the Syrian wars contributed to the weakening of the ruling power. On one occasion, in the famous battle of Raphia (217 BC), Ptolemy IV was forced to recruit not only from the local Greco-Macedonian army, which was the general custom, but also from the native Egyptians who were trained to fight in the Macedonian-style phalanx, which proved a great success. Consequently, the Egyptian soldiers were included in the Greek kleruchic system of land allotment. The main location of the kleruchies was in the reclaimed land in Fayoum,⁴⁰⁶ but also in the Oxyrhynchite nome of Middle Egypt. Holders of this type of land, which could be passed on as inheritance, came to represent one of the wealthiest groups in Ptolemaic Egypt.⁴⁰⁷ The 3rd century BC census lists of people required to pay the capitation taxes establish that kleruchs were classified as “Hellenic,” who paid much less taxes and had the largest households, with livestock, domestic slaves, and dependent farmers.⁴⁰⁸ While residing in the metropoleis, they would lease out their holdings in the villages to farmers of Egyptian status, a structure that would continue during Roman rule.⁴⁰⁹ Crawford’s study of the Kerkeosiris (in Fayoum) land survey documents shows that all the new kleruchic settlers in the period 130–120 BC had Egyptian names, and that in 119–8 BC there were 63 kleruchic holdings by Egyptians compared to 41 held by foreign cavalry and officials.⁴¹⁰ With the Inaros cycle in mind, it seems that Fayoum would have accommodated what seems to be the perfect “veteran” audience for the warrior stories of the cycle. This would place a possible audience for this genre outside the temple and may also account for the popularity of the genre in that particular region.

⁴⁰⁵ See for example: F. W. Walbank, “Egypt in Polybius,” In *Orbis Aegyptiorum Speculum: Glimpses of Ancient Egypt; Studies in Honour of H. W. Fairman*, 180–89.

⁴⁰⁶ A. Monson, “The Fiscal Regime in Transition: Private Land from Ptolemaic to Roman Egypt (conference Paper),” in *American Philological Association* (Chicago: 2008).

⁴⁰⁷ J. Rowlandson, *Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt: The Social Relations of Agriculture in the Oxyrhynchite Nome*, 211–14.

⁴⁰⁸ Egyptians with Hellenic status could thus use a Greek name for legal transactions involving Greek law and an Egyptian one for other aspects of their lives. On the basis of 3rd century documents, it has been estimated that the Arsinoite nome alone could have provided about 1,000 kleruchic cavalry and 400 regular cavalry, that is half the “native” cavalry recorded in the Ptolemaic army at Raphia in 217 BC: N. Pollard, “Military Institutions and Warfare: Graeco-Roman,” In *A companion to Ancient Egypt*, 451. For Hellenic status cf. W. Clarysse and D. J. Thompson, *Counting the People in Hellenistic Egypt*, 144 & 151–3.

⁴⁰⁹ Rowlandson, *Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt: The Social Relations of Agriculture in the Oxyrhynchite Nome*, 27–61 & 125–34.

⁴¹⁰ D. J. Crawford, *Kerkeosiris: An Egyptian Village in the Ptolemaic Period*, 70–1.

By the 2nd century BC the Syrian Wars had become a constant plague to Egypt, with Rome interfering on a regular basis.⁴¹¹ As intrigues continued amongst the Ptolemies with Rome constantly acting as the overall decision maker: Ptolemy VIII willed his possessions to Rome in 154 BC and ruled Egypt for 54 years, while Ptolemy XI, being unable to pay back his loans, willed his entire kingdom to Rome and ruled for less than 20 days. When the Alexandrians chose Ptolemy XII (80-51 BC) as their king, they drove him into exile shortly thereafter, due to his pro-Roman policy. Having no resources to win back his dynasty, the king turned to the Roman governor of Syria, Gabinius, paying him a substantial bribe to gain Roman support, crippling the Egyptian economy. Rome became guardian for Ptolemy XIII and Cleopatra VII and two years later Caesar was in Egypt with his troops. Not long after, in 31 BC, the future emperor Octavian, the future emperor Augustus, defeated the joined forces of Antony and Cleopatra in the famous Battle of Actium. Octavian installed a Roman governor and administrative staff in Egypt, together with a Roman army whose main function was to supervise imperial possessions and monopolies. Egypt was reduced to the status of a Roman province.

Along with the Romans came the principle of “descent”. If a person was an inhabitant of Egypt but not a Roman citizen, a citizen of one of the poleis, or a Jew, that person fell under a single political and judicial category *Egyptian*. The traditional strategos “general” assigned to each nome under the Ptolemies who traditionally had responsibility over the kleruchs, was stripped of any military authority and reduced to a status of a civil official.⁴¹² The only military officers were those who belonged to the Roman forces, strategically positioned in Roman fortified camps and outposts in the country as opposed to the previous Ptolemaic pattern of the kleruchs. Only Roman citizens could be enrolled in the legions and their term of service was that of 25 years. Auxiliary troops were only rewarded with Roman citizenship upon honorable discharge after 26 years of service.⁴¹³ Thus all the routes to a privileged status were barred to the *Egyptian*, which, one must keep in mind, could also be an individual entirely Hellenized, only not in terms of descent or citizenship. It was not before 212 AD when Roman

⁴¹¹ The Italian agriculture had by then been ravaged by almost a decade of war with Hannibal in the Punic Wars, and Egypt thus was the main supply to the republic.

⁴¹² His importance was already declining during the late 3rd century BC, see J. D. Thomas, "The Administration of Roman Egypt: A Survey of Recent Research and Some Outstanding Problems," In *Atti del XXII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia: Firenze, 23-29 agosto 1998*, 1247-8. For administration in general cf. T. Kruse, *Der königliche Schreiber und die Gauverwaltung: Untersuchungen zur Verwaltungsgeschichte Ägyptens in der Zeit von Augustus bis Philippus Arabs (30 v. Chr. - 245 n. Chr.)*.

⁴¹³ For summary of the data, see, e.g. R. Alston, *Soldier and Society in Roman Egypt: A Social History*, 24-7.

citizens were made of almost everyone in the boundaries of the empire.⁴¹⁴ Until then, an Egyptian was only exceptionally admitted to Roman citizenship (through Alexandrian citizenship) and the opportunity of exploiting one's Hellenic origin for social mobility was no longer effective. In other words, "the Macedonians had degenerated to the level of Egyptians," as the Roman historian Titus Livius (59 BC- 17 AD) observed in his History of Rome and the Roman people,⁴¹⁵ which covered the period from the earliest legends of Rome through to the reign of Augustus (Octavian) in his own time.

The most illustrative document representing the segregating politics which the Roman Empire exercised in its province lists over a hundred rules and regulations that the Privy Purse had to implement, some of which are:⁴¹⁶

Copy of the code of regulations which the deified Augustus established for the administration of the Privy Purse, and of additions made to it from time to time by either the emperors or the senate or the several prefects or the administrator in charge of the Privy Purse.

38. *Those born of an urban Greek mother and an Egyptian remain Egyptian but inherit from both parents.*

39. *If a Roman man or woman is joined in marriage with an urban Greek or Egyptian, either child follows the inferior status.*

42. *Those who style themselves improperly are punished with confiscation of a fourth [of their estate], and those who knowingly concur therein are also punished with confiscation.*

43. *If Egyptians after a father's death record their father as a Roman, a fourth [of their estate] is confiscated.*

49. *Freedmen of Alexandrians may not marry Egyptian women.*

⁴¹⁴ Carcalla's *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212: an edict that extended Roman citizenship to all the adult males of the Roman Empire, excluding "rebellious" freedmen, who were forever excluded from Roman citizenship. It is preserved on pGiss 40: O. Montevecchi, "Note sull'applicazione della Constitutio Antoniniana in Egitto," In *Quaderni Catanesi di studi classici e medievali*, 355-69; A. Lukaszewicz, "Remarques sur les rapports entre les élites urbaines de l'Égypte et la dynastie des Sévères," *JJP* 24: 87-95, (1994): 87-95. B. Kelly, *Petitions, Litigation, and Social Control in Roman Egypt*, 50.

⁴¹⁵ *Ab Urbe Condita Libiri* (=Books from the Foundation of the City), Book 38: 37

⁴¹⁶ *Gnomon of the Idios Logos*, a handbook or code of regulations preserved on BGU 5.1210; POxy 41.3014: Publications and discussions: P. R. Swarney, *The Ptolemaic and Roman Idios Logos*. See also, e.g.: S. Riccobono, *Il Gnomon dell'Idios Logos*; S. Riccobono, *Das römische Reichsrecht und der Gnomon des Idios Logos*. B. Anagnostou-Canas, "La réparation du préjudice dans les papyrus grecs d'Égypte," In *Symposion 2005, Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte, Salerno, 14-18 September 2005*, 307-26. The following translation is in: N. Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, 33.

56. Soldiers who style themselves Romans without having received a legal discharge are fined a fourth of their property.

The document testifies to Augustus' political program, which was to be maintained by his successors hindering any social mobility and keeping the different classes as isolated as possible.⁴¹⁷ In short terms, the rules state that only intermarriages between Greeks and Romans could assure that children could attain a higher status and any modes of "faking" a Roman/Hellenic identity would result in severe punishment.

Egypt included within its borders three Greek-style cities (*polis*): Naukratis in the Delta, the port city of Alexandria, and Ptolemais west of Thebes. To these, a fourth city was added by Emperor Hadrian in 130 AD, Antinoopolis in Middle Egypt, which was named after the emperor's beloved Antinous who had drowned in that spot while they were sailing on the Nile. With some variations, the four cities seem basically to conform to the same organizational model.⁴¹⁸ Common for all was the council elected by the cities' own citizens. An exception to this model was the city of Alexandria as a consequence of its historical hostility towards Roman rule. Alexandria only had its own council since 200 AD when Emperor Septimius Severus instituted such councils in all nome capitals of Egypt.⁴¹⁹

"The laws of the Egyptians," as it was termed by the Roman Empire, was at the time of the conquest an accumulation of operative law and custom, some of it Egyptian but most of it Hellenic in origin.⁴²⁰ Gradually the Roman government modified these practices and principles. For example, under the Ptolemies, separate civil courts for the two dominating cultures in the country were established; one for each legal system. The two jurisdictions were not, however, restricted with regards to their clients and any complainant, Greek or Egyptian, could choose either court and interpreters were used if a language problem arose. Toward the middle of the First Century AD, this bipartite organization was abandoned and authority was handed to the strategos or epistrategos with jurisdiction over all sorts of cases, personal to financial.

⁴¹⁷ Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, 32-3.

⁴¹⁸ See, e.g.: R. Alston, *The City in Roman and Byzantine Egypt*.

⁴¹⁹ Severus' reforms: W. L. Westermann and A. A. Schiller, *Apokrimata. Decisions of Septimius Severus on Legal Matters*. Also: A. K. Bowman, *The Town Councils of Roman Egypt*.

⁴²⁰ No document as such may be attested as "Egyptian law," and it is generally difficult to distinguish between law and administration in ancient Egypt. "Egyptian Law" is rather a reference to traditional manners of administration that was in effect before Roman rule, in which Hellenic and Egyptian elements were present, see e.g. S. Allam, "Egyptian Law Courts in Pharaonic and Hellenistic Times," *JEA* 77, (1991): 109-27. For discussion on the "Eisagogeus" as a continuance of a pharaonic institution, see S. Allam, "Regarding the Eisagogeus at Ptolemaic Law Courts," *JEA* 1, (2008): 1-19. For the "Egyptian Law" in Roman Egypt: U. Yiftach-Firanko, "Law in Graeco-Roman Egypt: Hellenization, Fusion, Romanization," In *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, 541-60.

In the Ptolemaic period almost every Hellenized village had a *gymnasium* where male youths received athletic and military training, and members of the elite gathered to socialize and pursue intellectual activities. With the Roman rule the gymnasium was confined to the poleis as a preserved symbol of “true” *polis*-tradition.⁴²¹ Access to the gymnasium had since the rule of the Ptolemies required proof of Hellenic descent, but as already mentioned the routes to this status were flexible. Roman rule stipulated that access to the gymnasium could solely be acquired if both “great-grandparents” were descendants of the gymnasiarch class.⁴²²

This policy of descent was at work on many levels of society, such as intermarriages, membership in the polies, heritage and so forth. As Mark Depauw has noted, the period witnesses an increased application of maternal and paternal lineage in judicial texts as well as incestuous marriages,⁴²³ on an official level. Whether incest was actually involved is naturally unknown, but most likely marriages within the family were the most secure method of preserving status and wealth.

During this period one, Eudaimon realized the limited advantage of having Egyptian paternal and maternal names. His own name was Greek, perhaps chosen by his parents to facilitate his life, perhaps he changed his own name at some point, or his name reflects the Hellenization of his parents. Be that as it may, Eudaimon, son of *Psios and Tiathres* wrote the authorities on 27th of August AD 194 in order to change his parents name into their Greek equivalents:

To his Excellency Claudius Apollonios, administrator of the Privy Purse, from Eudaimon son of Psios and Tiathres, of the village of [---] in the Nsyth nome. I desire my lord, from now on to have my designation changed and style myself Eudaimon son of Heron and Didyme (=Twin) instead of son of Psios and Tiathres (t3-ḥtr "twin"), as no public or private interest will thereby be injured but I will be benefited. Farewell. I, Eudaimon, have submitted [this date]

And to his relief the application was approved:

*[Subscript] As no public or private interest is injured, I allow it. (Select Papyri 301)*⁴²⁴

⁴²¹ R. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 34-6.

⁴²² As for example in the Oxyrhynchite nome already in 4/5 AD: S. Bussi, *Le élites locali nella provincia d'Egitto di prima età imperiale*, 17-20.

⁴²³ cf. M. Depauw, "Do Mothers Matter? The Emergence of Metronymics in Early Roman Egypt," In *The Language of the Papyri*, 120-39.

⁴²⁴ A. S. Hunt and C. C. Edgar, *Select Papyri* 2, 312-13. This translation in Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, 32.

The text indicates that room was left for “flexibility” in the Roman system, and in light of the abovementioned circumstances, Eudaimon’s motivations for changing his name certainly become justifiable, he would indeed benefit from it.

The metropolite class was presumably a blend of Hellenized Egyptians as well as Greeks. Whether these families constituted the totality of the metropolite class or only its nucleus is still not clear. What is clear, however, is that under Roman rule, descendants of intermarriages with Egyptians or other ethnicities could not qualify as metropolites. When a metropolite boy was approaching his fourteenth birthday, his parents had to submit a formal application for his “verification” of status with regards to his enrolment in the registry of their class. The application stated the year of the enrolment of the boy’s father and of his mother’s father. In Oxyrhynchus and Hermopolis, the custom was to demonstrate membership in the gymnasial class by every male ancestor, paternal and maternal, all the way back to the initial list. Thus, one application from 260 AD (p.Oxy. 18 2186) records the membership of the applicant’s ancestry in the gymnasium seven generations back. After the books were closed for further applicants, membership could be attained through a specific grant by a competent authority. Marriage with outsiders excluded the children from the metropolite status, and many papyri testify to sibling marriages within this class and families, until sibling union was banned in the Roman Empire in AD 295.

To sum up, Hellenic lineage was the key to high status under the Ptolemies, but the means of reaching this status were more flexible and could be attained through intermarriages and military service as well as through the courtesy of the authority. Among these categories, the Egyptian kleruchs formed a substantial portion, which were allotted land mainly in the Fayoum region. The flexible Ptolemaic policies consequently left room for the emergence of Helleno-Egyptian identity where several aspects of culture were exchanged, adapted and assimilated. The Roman regime rearranged the former administration, installing strictly Roman policies, which kept Hellenic and Egyptian statuses apart. Roman citizenship and class-enrolments were complicated by a series of rules and legislations that in modern day terminology would be considered as prime examples of segregation and racism. An example is intermarriages, which could result in diminution of status. Within this political program, descent became a principle for distributing important resources, increasing ethnic consciousness, at least if one wished to climb the social hierarchy. In the metropoleis, various cultural and religious traditions that signified Hellenic identity were preserved and practiced including literature, theatre and the gymnasium.

(4.3) Hellenism in Egypt

Roman segregation policies paved the way for a strong Hellenistic identity that had been developing since the fourth century BC. In the metropoleis, the nome capitals, many cultural aspects of Hellenism were sustained, even though many townspeople, including those who claimed to be of pure Hellenic descent, went under the category *Egyptian*. The metropolitans persisted in boasting of their Hellenic ties, be they real or imagined.⁴²⁵ They modeled their lives and their physical surroundings as much as possible on those of the four poleis of Egypt with public buildings, games and festivals of Greek gods on a scale that often exceeded the economic capacities. One such town was Oxyrhynchus, capital of the 19th nome, situated 160km Southwest of modern Cairo with its colonnaded street, columns of the Corinthian order,⁴²⁶ Serapis temple, and a large and excessively decorated theatre believed to have had a capacity of 11,000 people in the Roman period.⁴²⁷ Here, for example, in the 3rd century AD, a public benefactor established a trust fund the interest of which was staging the annual ephebic contests in “the same style as those staged at Antinoopolis.”⁴²⁸

With regards to textual evidence from this period, scholars are in the advantageous position that Oxyrhynchus has produced thousands of Greek and Latin papyri preserved from the period between the 1st and 6th centuries AD. This extraordinary circumstance has provided texts with contents that range from accounts, tax returns and census material, to invoices, receipts, to administrative correspondence on military, religious, economic, and political matters, which were periodically cleaned out of government offices, and dumped in the desert. Onto these, the private citizens added their own piles of “unwanted” papers, thus providing present day scholars with an extensive knowledge about the town and its people.⁴²⁹ Oxyrhynchus is thus an exceptional archeological source with hundreds of papyri of known and unknown literary texts of all types including the remains of at least two private Greek libraries.⁴³⁰

Greek remained the *lingua franca* of Egypt, and literary papyri testify that works of all major Hellenic authors continued to be copied and recopied in Egypt during and after Roman rule,⁴³¹ while

⁴²⁵ R. S. Bagnall, "The People of the Roman Fayum," In *Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: Sources and Approaches*. The author argues that most of the Greek speaking inhabitants of the Fayoum saw themselves as both Hellenic and Egyptian and that it is such people who commissioned the famous mummy portraits.

⁴²⁶ D. M. Bailey, "Classical Architecture in Roman Egypt," In *Architecture and Architectural Sculpture in the Roman Empire*, 122-3.

⁴²⁷ D. Rathbone, "Roman Egypt," In *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*, 706-7.

⁴²⁸ Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, 39.

⁴²⁹ cf. P. Parsons, *The City of the Sharp-nosed Fish: Everyday Life in the Nile Valley.*, and A. K. Bowman and others, eds., *Oxyrhynchus: A City and its Texts*.

⁴³⁰ F. Kenyon, "The Library of a Greek of Oxyrhynchus," *JEA* 8, (1922): 129-38.

⁴³¹ Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, 59.

new important Greek works of literature were already being produced during Ptolemaic rule.⁴³² Unfortunately, most of the poetry has not survived in its complete form, but fragments of poems and references thereof by other authors and collectors of manuscripts provide an idea about the most influential poems of the time. Menander was among the popular dramatist and the only completely preserved copy of his comedy has survived from Egypt (Aninoopolis?) along with copies of three of his plays.⁴³³ Other famous poets were Demosthenes, Euripides and Hesiod, and evidence suggests that Egyptian priests were well aware of these poets and their works as seen, for example, among the Greek papyri found in priestly houses and rubbish dumps near the temple of Soknopaiou Nesos and Tebtunis, which included fragments of Homer and Euripides.⁴³⁴ But Homer was by far the most popular poet, referred to all through antiquity simply as “the poet.” He was read in the private sphere as well as in school, and fragments of more than one thousand manuscripts with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* have been found in Egypt.⁴³⁵

Greek traditions were thus cultivated and preserved in the Roman period. The richest source of Greek literary traditions are mainly Oxyrhynchus and the Fayoum region,⁴³⁶ where classics and new compositions were read, copied and performed: an example is an oratory of Euripides (pOxy. 31 2548) from the 3rd century AD.⁴³⁷

Unfortunately, and due to circumstances referred to in the course of the present chapter, it is almost impossible to determine ethnic origins of the social classes of Egypt during the Greco-Roman period, as Hellenization was taking form on a socio-cultural level from the onset of Ptolemaic rule: in the poleis, metropoleis, as well as their surrounding villages, intermarriages had taken root, names were changed, citizenships were obtained and Helleno-Egyptian identities were entwined. But what about

⁴³² A survey of Greek literature produced in Hellenistic Egypt is in: A. D. Morrison, "Greek Literature in Egypt," In *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, 775-8. Translation of major Hellenistic poets in: F. J. Nisetich, *The Poems of Callimachus*. A. Verity, *Theocritus: Idylls*. R. L. Hunter, *Jason and the Golden Fleece*. General introduction to the Hellenistic period and its literature: A. W. Bulloch, "Hellenistic Poetry," In *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*.; G. O. Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry*. R. L. Hunter, "Literature and its Contexts," In *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*, 477-93.

⁴³³ cf. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 199. A. A. MacDonald, Michael W. Twomey, and G. J. Reinink, *Learned Antiquity: Scholarship and Society in the Near East, the Greco-Roman World, and the Early Medieval West*, 153ff.

⁴³⁴ P. Van Minnen, "Boorish or Bookish? Literature in Egyptian Villages in the Fayum in the Graeco-Roman Period," *JJP* 28, (1998): 145-68.

⁴³⁵ For Homer as most attested exercise, cf. e.g. R. Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, esp. 46 and catalogue on 204ff. see also: R. Cribiore, "Literary School Exercises," *ZPE* 116, (1997): 53-60. For influence in Egypt and circulation of Homer, see also: I. Morris and B. P. Powell, *A New Companion to Homer*, 55-100; M. Finkelberg, "Regional Texts and the Circulation of Books: the case of Homer," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 46, (2006): 231-48.

⁴³⁶ Stephens and Winkler, eds., *Ancient Greek Novels: The Fragments. Introduction, Text, Translation, and Commentary*, 7.

⁴³⁷ Text image: <http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy/ees/ees.html>.

the Egyptian priesthood who seemed to have been rather privileged during the Ptolemaic dynasty? From the dawn of Egyptian history, the priesthood was an exclusive cast with major influences in the political arena, and the Ptolemies had realized their value and offered space for religious syncretism of which the most obvious is the establishment of the cult of Serapis. Under Roman rule, the priestly organization and their income were significantly reduced and controlled, and a lesser number of the temples and priests retained privileges in the form of tax and corvée exemption.

(4.3.1) The priesthood

Egyptian temple organization was rather different from its Hellenic counterpart, which had no clergy, but only managers and administrators who were elected by the (metro)polites from their own class. They functioned in annual rotations, attending to the maintenance of the temples and the cultic requirements of the shrines, and the office of chief priest was not hereditary, but open to all within the (metro)polite class.⁴³⁸ In contrast, Egyptian temples consisted of a hereditary priestly organization supported by several grades of attendants, and the temples had great wealth and political influence.⁴³⁹ When Egypt was annexed into the Roman Empire, Augustus instituted a system of control that efficiently reduced and restrained the wealth and political influence that the priesthood previously could benefit from under the Ptolemies. Records of temple staff and financial accounts were regularly subject to examination by representatives of the Privy Purse and while the priests could hold several official titles in the past, Roman rule prohibited such arrangements, restraining them from engaging in other activities than those related to divine service.⁴⁴⁰ This monitoring scheme against the priesthood and its establishment was already instigated during the early years of Roman occupation and is recorded on an edict of the prefect Gaius Turanius from year 4 BC:⁴⁴¹

I order [the temples] to register their hereditary priest and acolytes and all the others belonging to the temples and their children, and to make clear what functions they perform. I will then scrutinize the list of the current 26th year of [Augustus] Caesar, and those not of priestly origin I will forthwith remove. (BGU IV 1199)

⁴³⁸ Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, 91.

⁴³⁹ W. Clarysse, A. Schoors, and H. Willems, *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years. Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur*. It provides a series of articles on Egyptian religion in Greco-Roman Egypt. For a comprehensive survey of titles and functions, see also, Sauneron, *Les prêtres de l'ancienne Égypte*.

⁴⁴⁰ This affected only the priests in the top offices. Lesser offices were usually held by ordinary people who combined serving the temple with farming and others activities: W. Clarysse, "Egyptian Temples and Priests: Graeco-Roman," In *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, 288.

⁴⁴¹ The following translation is in: Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, 92. Available online:

<http://perseus.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.05.0001&layout=&loc=1199>

Consequently, the numbers of priests and the temples' landholdings were significantly reduced,⁴⁴² and another major blow from the Roman government followed when the previously automatic exemption from tax and from performing obligatory public services for those whose priestly status was certified was abolished. Instead, such privileges were only given to a certain number or category of priests, as for example those of the temple of Tebtunis. But as Clarysse notes, priestly privileges were not completely eliminated during the first two centuries of Roman rule and a favored number who were exempt from some taxes did flourish, well paid for their services. They had prime access to temple lands, which they turned into private possessions: the most prominent of them became part of the Greek-speaking elite.⁴⁴³ Of all the non-Jewish population, the priests alone were allowed to be circumcised, but even circumcision required a permit filed from government agencies. One example is in the following application, which was submitted to the nome strategos in 187 AD by four priests of the "famous, tax-exempt temple of [the village of] Tebtunis:"⁴⁴⁴

With reference to application sent to you by Maremsemis son of Marsisouchos son of Harpokration, priest of the said temple, requesting that his son Panesis born of Thenpakebkis daughter of Panesis be circumcised, in reply to your inquiry whether he is of priestly descent and entitled to be circumcised we declare on oath by the fortune of Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antonius Augustus that his priestly descent and the proofs submitted for him are genuine, and that he must be circumcised because he cannot perform the sacred offices unless this is done. If not [as we have stated], may we be liable to the consequences of our oath [signatures]

If the strategos found the boy's lineage acceptable, he would so certify to the high priest of Egypt (the aid of the Roman governor), who would then hold a hearing on the application. According to the minutes of one such hearing in 171 AD the high priest:⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴² e.g. 10% of Ptolemaic Fayoum were registered with priestly functions while, in comparison, the list of temples on BGU 13 2215 from 112 AD records 61 priests in Bakchias, 54 priests and 50 pastophoroi in Karanis, 40 or 50 priests and 40 pastophoroi in Tebtunis, cf. Clarysse and Thompson, *Counting the People in Hellenistic Egypt*, 195 & 188-90.

⁴⁴³ Clarysse, "Egyptian Temples and Priests: Graeco-Roman," In *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, 290.

⁴⁴⁴ pTebt. 2 293: B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt, and E. J. Goodspeed, eds., *The Tebtunis Papyri, Part II*, 63-7. This Translation in: Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, 93.

⁴⁴⁵ BGU 1 347: <http://perseus.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.05.0001&layout=&loc=347>. This Translation in: Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*.

Enquired of the leaders and assistant leaders of the delegation, and of the scribes [and keepers] of the sacred records, whether the boy had any blemish on his body. Upon their saying that he was without blemish, Ulpus Serenianus, high-priest and minister for temple administration, by appending his signature to the letter from the strategos, gave permission for the boy to be circumscised in accordance with custom.

It is interesting to note that hardly any revolts occurred on behalf of the priesthood against the Roman government. Presumably, this was a result of the strict control now implemented on the temples. In the town villages some priests and temples, as discussed above, were rather well off and perhaps they did not feel the need to rebel. It was in Alexandria that a violent riot occurred in AD 172, led by an Egyptian priest named Isidorus. The rebellion, known as the *boukoloi* revolts (*boukoloi* usually translated “herdsman”), would have ended with the conquest of Alexandria if not the son of the Prefect of Egypt was summoned from Syria, he managed to divide the rebels and defeat them in several battles.⁴⁴⁶

(4.3.2) The Priesthood in Greco-Roman Traditions

Since entrance to the temple was confined to the priests, they functioned as the intermediaries between the two domains of temple and laity. The Egyptian priesthood, by means of its expertise in the traditional language and scriptures, held a prominent status in their communities outside the domain of the temple. Such a status was easier cultivated due to their distinctive physical appearance and way of life making them “models of divine contiguity and reciprocity.”⁴⁴⁷ Accordingly, they could serve as ritual experts in their communities nourishing the local needs, which were primarily concerned with issues of daily life such as fertility, childbirth, protective amulets, and blessings and curses.

The Egyptian priesthood was thus unique in its proficiency in the ritual domain: an authority in the world of magic which composed all sorts of spells for use in the world of the living as well as that of the dead, and a source that had the secret means to communicate with the gods and connect the living with the world beyond. David Frankfurter has argued that it was this “exotic” aspect of the Egyptian priest as the ritual expert that fascinated the Hellenistic cultures resulting in a high “demand” for their skills.⁴⁴⁸ He notes that, while the general shape and structure of magical spells remained typically

⁴⁴⁶ cf. L. Capponi, “Serapis, Boukoloi and Christians from Hadrian to Marcus Aurelius,” In *Hadrian and the Christians*, 131ff. The author also discusses the role of the boukoloi.

⁴⁴⁷ Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 219.

⁴⁴⁸ D. Frankfurter, “The Consequences of Hellenism in Late Antique Egypt: Religious Worlds and Actors,” *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 2, (2000): 162-94.

Egyptian, the contents of the spells shifted towards a more popular objective, such as those mentioned above, including erotic pursuits and attaining revelations.⁴⁴⁹ Frankfurter identifies this development as a result of the Hellenistic “stereotyping” of priestly skills, which resulted in the priesthood’s confirmation of that stereotype by reworking spells in accordance with demands: a sort of supply-and-demand process.

The “stereotyping” of the Egyptian priesthood as experts in magic and divination is echoed in Greek and Latin texts of the Roman period. But while Egyptian literary tradition centers on an ideal image of the priest influencing society and the course of history by means of his knowledge and magical skills,⁴⁵⁰ the Hellenistic stereotype offers a very different picture. Dieleman presents the main contrasts between the Hellenistic and traditional Egyptian image of the priest as follows:⁴⁵¹ Greek and Latin literature may question the competence of the priest, or portray him as a performer of magical feats for money: an image completely absent in the Egyptian narratives. As opposed to the image of the respected member of society in Egyptian texts, the priests in Greek and Latin texts occur as individuals alienated from society who function as exotic gurus or miracle workers. In these representations, the royal court is absent as an arena of display, which is completely contrasted in Egyptian literature where the priests are always connected to the royal sphere. While Egyptian narratives are set in the past, Greek and Latin texts present an image that is contemporary with its audience. Finally, while the priest is an actor who focalizes and speaks in Egyptian literary tradition, he is mainly a passive object subordinated to a Hellenistic viewpoint in Greek and Latin texts.

However, some of the priests’ attributes remain similar in both Hellenistic and native traditions. For example, the Kalasiris in Heliodorus of Emesa’s *Aethiopika*⁴⁵² (c. 3rd century AD) is in reality a Memphite high priest in refuge who is not only an expert in romantic matters but also in curative spells. He cures the heroine Charikleia of what he terms the “Evil Eye” in Book 3, and performs divination and deciphers the Ethiopian royal script in Book 4. This image conforms to the traditional Egyptian portrayal of the priest as a specialist in deciphering ancient writings and preparing remedies, as for example Khamwase.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁹ D. Frankfurter, "The Consequences of Hellenism in Late Antique Egypt: Religious Worlds and Actors," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 2, (2000): 175-83.

⁴⁵⁰ § (2) for the motifs.

⁴⁵¹ Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 249.

⁴⁵² Heliodorus, *Aithiopika: An Ethiopian Romance*. Translated by T. Underdowne (Anno 1587), revised and partly rewritten by F. A. Wright, with additional corrections in the online edition by S. Rhoads:

<http://www.elfinspell.com/HeliodorusTitle.html>

⁴⁵³ cf. (2.5.1)

Another Memphite priest, Panchrates, is in Lucian of Samosata's (2nd century AD) *Philopseudes*.⁴⁵⁴ He had lived underground for 23 years in the sanctuaries of Egypt, learning magic from Isis. He could control animals, for example he could ride on crocodiles, and turn broomsticks into servants by putting clothes upon them, saying a certain spell which would make the broomstick walk (Philopseudes 34). This image is reminiscent of the most common and recurring motifs in Egyptian stories about priests which involve creating images out of wax and bringing them to life through magic spells for them to execute the magician's orders. The earliest story that utilizes this motif is *Khufu's Court* where Ubainer creates a crocodile from wax and recites a spell over it instructing it to eat his wife's lover. Panchrates does not utilize wax, but the concept of bringing life to inert objects certainly fits well with the Egyptian portrayals of the priest. The motif of having power over dangerous animals, such as the crocodile, is also conforming to the Egyptian representations.

An additional example that deserves attention is the introduction to the Greek astrological guidebook attributed to Thessalos of Tralles (1st century AD).⁴⁵⁵ In its preface, Thessalus relates how he had pursued a medical education in Alexandria. Some years later, he discovered an ancient book of king Nechepsos (Necho II, 610-595 BC) with twenty-four medical cures according to the signs of the Zodiac. After several attempts, Thessalos fails in making the cures of Necho effective. He decides to travel through Egypt in search for an answer to his problem. He reaches Thebes (12) and finds "scholarly high-priests and elders ascribing to various teachings" and befriends one of them whom he persuades to arrange a divination:

Now this man professed to have the ability to perceive divine visions in the activity of a dish of water. (15) So I invited him to walk with me in the most solitary place in the city, revealing nothing about what I wanted him to do. (16) Departing, therefore, into some sacred woods where we were surrounded by the deepest silence, I suddenly fell down crying and was clinging to the feet of the high-priest. (17) As he was struck with amazement at the unexpected nature of what he saw and was inquiring why I was doing this, I declared that the power of my soul was in his hands, for it was necessary for me to converse with a god or else — if I failed to meet this desire — I was about to commit suicide. (18) As he raised me up from the ground and comforted me with the most gentle words, he gladly promised to do these things and commanded me to keep myself pure for three days. (19) After my soul had been soothed by the promises of the high-

⁴⁵⁴ Translation: LCL 14.

⁴⁵⁵ Attested in several Greek and Latin redactions: Friedrich, *Thessalos von Tralles: griechisch und lateinisch*. Present translation is by Philip A. Harland available online: <http://www.philipharland.com/travel/Thessalos.htm>.

priest, I was kissing his right hand and expressing thanks as my tears flowed like a gushing spring.

The text has several traditional Egyptian components. The motif of Necho as the composer of the manuscript exposes the Egyptian tradition that associates this king with magic and astrology.⁴⁵⁶ The representation also survives in several episodes of the *Alexander Romance* where Nectanebo, the last native king of Egypt, is identified as father of Alexander the Great, who is said to have won battles against the Persians through his magical skills: he would recite spells upon wax figures of the enemies causing the destruction of the live soldiers at the same moment. He is also said to have sent a dream to Olympia through reciting a spell over a model of her image. She then received a dream prophesizing the birth of the future Alexander the Great.⁴⁵⁷

Another Egyptian component of the text is in the vision where Thessalos meets the god of medicine, Asclepius himself, whose Egyptian counterpart was the historical Imhotep, who was deified in the Roman period as the son of Ptah, and attributed the authorship of several astrological manuals and described as ‘the one who lets be known the movement of the stars.’⁴⁵⁸ From the god, Thessalos receives secret knowledge concerning the connections between effective healing, plants, and the stars:

Now when he had shut me in the room and commanded me to sit opposite the throne upon which the god was about to sit, he led me through the god’s secret names and he shut the door as he left. (24) Once I sat down, I was being released from body and soul by the incredible nature of the spectacle. For neither the facial features of Asklepios nor the beauty of the surrounding decoration can be expressed clearly in human speech. Then, reaching out his right hand, Asklepios began to say: (25) ‘Oh blessed Thessalos, attaining honor in the presence of the god. As time passes, when your successes become known, men will worship you as a god. Ask freely, then, about what you want and I will readily grant you everything.’ (26) I scarcely heard anything, for I had been struck with amazement and overwhelmed by seeing the form of the god. Nevertheless, I was inquiring why I had failed when trying the prescriptions of Nechepso. To this the god said: (27) ‘King Nechepso, a man of most sound mind and all honorable forms of excellence, did not obtain from an utterance of the gods what you are seeking to learn. Since he had a good natural ability, he observed the sympathy of stones and plants with the stars, but he did not know the

⁴⁵⁶ cf. (2.4.1)

⁴⁵⁷ Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend*, 14.

⁴⁵⁸ cf. (2.4.1).

correct times and places one must pick the plants. (28) For the produce of every season grows and withers under the influence of the stars. That divine spirit, which is most refined, pervades throughout all substance and most of all throughout those places where the influences of the stars are produced upon the cosmic foundation'.

In its own right, this passage exhibits the “stereotype” of the Egyptian high priest as the only one that could help Thessalos in his search for secret knowledge. At the same time, the combination of Necho II as the composer of the cures and the divine instruction on their use serve as certification for their effectiveness and conform to the Egyptian association of the king with magic. In the end, Thessalos would not have achieved any success without the aid of the Egyptian priest in the first place and the instruction of Asclepius in the divination.

Finally, there is the protagonist in Pseudo-Clemens' *Recognitione* (c. 3rd century AD) who is tormented by the question whether the soul is immortal or not; he sets out for Egypt to have its priests put an end to his doubts:

*I shall proceed to Egypt, and there I shall cultivate the friendship of the hierophants or prophets, who preside at the shrines. Then I shall win over a magician by money, and entreat him, by what they call the necromantic art, to bring me a soul from the infernal regions, as if I were desirous of consulting it about some business. But this shall be my consultation, whether the soul be immortal.*⁴⁵⁹

In the historical sources, an Egyptian priest Harnouphis figures in Lucius Cassius Dio Cocceianus' (150-235 AD) history of Rome, accompanying emperor Marcus Aurelius (121- 181 AD) on his German campaign. The priest performs execration services such as delivering curse spells and miraculous rains upon the enemy (Cassius Dio, *Hist.* 72:8.4).⁴⁶⁰ This motif is paralleled in the Demotic *Djoser and Imhotep* where Imhotep accompanies the king on his campaign ensuring his victory through utilizing his magical powers against the foreign armies.

None of the above-mentioned sources are attributed to native Egyptian authors, a detail which exposes the image of the Egyptian priest as the “magos” *par excellence* surviving in Hellenistic culture for

⁴⁵⁹ *Recognitione* 5:1. The passage is quoted in: Frankfurter, "The Consequences of Hellenism in Late Antique Egypt: Religious Worlds and Actors," 169. Translation in: A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, and A. C. Coxe, eds., *The Ante-nicene Fathers: Volume VIII: Fathers of the Third and Fourth Century*, 78.

⁴⁶⁰ D. S Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay: Ad 180-395*, 31ff. Also quoted in Frankfurter, "The Consequences of Hellenism in Late Antique Egypt: Religious Worlds and Actors," 173.

many centuries. Frankfurter suggests that these magoi were extending indigenous priestly or scribal traditions to alien markets thus reaffirming Hellenic notions of the exotic Egyptian priests: they could rearrange temple traditions to suit Hellenistic taste, compose “new” spells, and create Egyptian traditions fitting with the new-comers’ needs, while simultaneously promoting their authority by virtue of their archaic history.⁴⁶¹ At the same time Dieleman notes: “Depending upon the rules of the genre determined, the author’s intention, and his religious or philosophical inclinations, the image was positively or negatively colored: either the Egyptian priest was represented as a philosopher who had acquired close contact with the divine by renouncing earthly pleasures, or he was constructed as a wandering fraudulent wizard who deceived his credulous clientele willing to pay for healings and contact with the divine.”⁴⁶²

The financial decline of the Egyptian temple and its organization instigated by the Roman government had forced many priests to seek new venues for exercising their traditional authority. As a result the priests assimilated to Hellenistic “stereotyping.” Meanwhile, the most noticeable feature of Egyptian culture for the Hellenes and Romans was the priesthood’s supernatural expertise, which was transmitted in their literary tradition.

In Egypt, this “exotic” notion of Egyptian religion also found room in the process of cultural negotiation. Some good examples may be found in Baines’ article in which he argues that indigenous elite self-presentations in Ptolemaic Egypt are central for assessing how far this group accommodated culturally to Ptolemaic rule, and conversely how far the Hellenistic elite adopted indigenous practices.⁴⁶³ He studies self-presentation in texts and images of various contexts, such as tomb decorations, biographies, and statues and notes that many of the customary native ideologies persisted throughout the Ptolemaic period even though an immigrant group, the Hellenes, was ruling the country. Accordingly, Egyptian self-presentation retained most of its traditional characteristics while it was simultaneously built upon to create new styles of composition as a response to the changed circumstances.

The earliest monument discussed by Baines is the tomb of the high priest of Thoth, Petosiris, at the necropolis of Hermopolis (Tuna el-Gebel, in Middle Egypt).⁴⁶⁴ The tomb dates to the first half of the

⁴⁶¹ Frankfurter, "The Consequences of Hellenism in Late Antique Egypt: Religious Worlds and Actors," 171ff.

⁴⁶² Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, 239.

⁴⁶³ J. Baines, "Egyptian Elite Self-Presentation in the Context of Ptolemaic Rule " In *Ancient Alexandria between Egypt and Greece*, 33-61.

⁴⁶⁴ Tomb: Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris*. Also: Otto, *Die biographischen Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit: ihre geistesgeschichtliche und literarische Bedeutung*, 174-84, no. 46. Text: Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume III: The Late Period*, 44-54. Present discussion: Baines, "Egyptian Elite Self-Presentation in the Context of Ptolemaic Rule " In *Ancient Alexandria between Egypt and Greece*, 45-9.

4th century BC, i.e. shortly after the conquest of Alexander the Great and it exhibits signs of cooperation between Egyptian and Hellenistic forms. As a whole, the tomb reveals a distinction between its outer and inner decorations. While the outer area is decorated in a fusion of Egyptian and Hellenistic forms, situated in an overall traditional Egyptian tomb-scene genre, the chapel, by contrast, is decorated purely in an Egyptian style. One might say that the visual aspect of the tomb was adapted to Greek eyes, while the vital innermost chapel retained its traditional motifs for traditional religious Egyptian practices. Philippe Derchain has further noted that the inscription of Petosiris's son, Thothrekh,⁴⁶⁵ which relates the death of the young child, has close parallels with the Greek epigraphy and literature on epitaphs of young individuals.⁴⁶⁶ Accordingly, Petosiris' Hellenizing was not limited to pictorial representation only and his tomb supports the hypothesis that a process of adaptation took root at the onset of the cultural encounter between the two ethnicities.

Another example applied by Baines is the anthropoid sarcophagus of general Dioskourides from the reign of Ptolemy VI (1st half of the 2nd century BC (presumably) from Saqqara),⁴⁶⁷ approximately 200 years after Petosiris' time. Dioskourides' mother had the Egyptian name Taimhotep (Taimuthes) while his father's name is unknown: it was not Egyptian custom to include the father's name in mortuary texts. Baines surmises that Dioskourides' father was a Greek, since military service was mainly offered to Greeks, but as was stated above the Ptolemies had begun to enroll Egyptians in military service around a century earlier, and the example of the above mentioned Eudaimon, who had Egyptian parents and a Greek name, must also be taken into consideration. Thus the ethnicity of Dioskourides cannot be determined with any certainty. At any rate, the sarcophagus is entirely Egyptian in appearance. The biographical text on the sarcophagus chest is linguistically poor, but in general appearance, it is as Egyptian as the rest of the decoration and texts (the orthography of which is also defective).⁴⁶⁸ Baines plausibly suggests that Dioskourides could not read Egyptian and was therefore content with a less than perfect formulation on the sarcophagus, but he also takes into consideration that only few people of any ethnic background commanded Classical Egyptian in hieroglyphs at that

⁴⁶⁵ Inscription nr. 56 on the door of the chapel, translation in: Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume III: The Late Period*, 52ff.

⁴⁶⁶ P. Derchain, *Les impondérables de l'hellénisation: littérature d'hiérogammates*, 32-3 and 54-7.

⁴⁶⁷ Unpublishe, but images are available on:

<http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/sarcophagus-dioscorides-greek-gyptian>. On Dioskourides, see, Baines, "Egyptian Elite Self-Presentation in the Context of Ptolemaic Rule " In *Ancient Alexandria between Egypt and Greece*, 42-3. See also: P Collombert, "Religion égyptienne et culture grecque: l'exemple de Dioskourides," *CdE* 75, (2000): 47-63. Also: R. Duttenhöfer, ed. *Griechische Urkunden der Papyrussammlung zu Leipzig (P. LIPS.II)*, 24.

⁴⁶⁸ See, e.g. Heike Sternberg el-Hotabi, "Der Untergang der Hieroglyphenschrift. Schriftverfall und Schrifttod im Ägypten der griechisch-römischen Zeit," *CdE* 69, (1994): 218-48. The author uses the Horus stelae attested from the NK onwards to document the loss of knowledge of the graphic system and its transmission in Greco-Roman Egypt.

date. In this context, the hieroglyphs themselves may be argued to have become “stereotype” as in signs that contain ritual power.

The mortuary texts on Dioskourides’ sarcophagus are, Baines notes, as Egyptian as the object’s appearance. They include several chapters of the *Book of the Dead*, such as chapters 18 and 19, for the triumph of the deceased over his enemies, in order to receive the “crown of justification,” and chapter 162 “for creating a flame under the head of the deceased.” His soul (*b3*) is depicted on the sarcophagus breast under which the “four sons of Horus” guard his entrails (in the canopic jars); while chapter 89 secures that his soul and body will come together. Dioskourides himself is depicted on a vignette, sitting opposite funerary deities, and standing to worship Osiris, where Chapter 72 for “coming forth by day and opening the tomb” ensures his eternal life. At the foot of the sarcophagus, this ideology is illustrated with an image of the god Anubis standing next to the tomb of Dioskourides while the soul of the latter soul is flying out of it. Clearly, the sarcophagus exhibits traditional Egyptian ideas about the afterlife, and the texts were presumably a reproduction from other sources, but they do reflect, however, that Dioskourides, although he was onomastically Hellenic, chose to follow an Egyptian tradition in death.

A final example, not included in Baines’ article, is a papyrus fragment from around the 2nd century BC. Compared to its size, a fragment of 9 lines, it has produced one of the most influential studies of bilingualism in Ptolemaic Egypt.⁴⁶⁹ It reads: “Finding out that you are learning Egyptian letters, I rejoice for you and for myself, because now when you return to the city you will teach boys (*paidaria*) at the house of the enema-doctor Phalou..es, and you will have a means of support for old age.”⁴⁷⁰ Rémondon investigated *what* this man was going to be teaching (it had been supposed that it would be Greek) and to *whom*. Through a process of analyzing the text and considering its cultural context, Rémondon argued that this individual would be teaching boys (*paidaria*) at Phalou..es’ establishment, which he identified as a medical school specializing in healing by the administration of enemas. The *paidaria*, he argued, were more likely young slaves than free apprentices, since training slaves in medical skills would enhance their value, which was a fairly common practice.⁴⁷¹ Rémondon further discussed the popularity of Egyptian medical practices among the Greeks and Romans, which has also been discussed in the course of the present chapter, and found that there would have been a market for such schools. As to the question of *what* the man would be teaching, Rémondon pointed out that the majority of slaves in the Ptolemaic period would be imported Greek-speaking people. An Egyptian doctor ran the school

⁴⁶⁹ Rémondon, “Problèmes du bilinguisme dans l’Égypte lagide (U.P.Z. I, 148),” 126-46.

⁴⁷⁰ Following Bagnall’s translation: R. S. Bagnall, *Reading Papyri, Writing Ancient History*, 27. Also discussed in R. S. Bagnall, *Reading Papyri, Writing Ancient History*, 26ff.

⁴⁷¹ Bagnall, *Reading Papyri, Writing Ancient History*, 28.

and taught an Egyptian medical specialty (such knowledge was thought to be teachable only in its own language) to Greek speaking slaves and the individual in question would have learned Egyptian in order to teach it to the slaves.

Several layers of cultural practices were thus adapted, assimilated, adopted and developed. The following section focuses on the Inaros cycle and considers the genre as a development, which was a result of adapting to Hellenic cultural schemata. It further argues that this genre reached its peak in the Roman period as a means of preserving a cultural identity, which by that time had become an Egypto-Hellenic amalgamation.

(4.4) Introduction of the Inaros Cycle and its Historical Background

Within the socio-cultural context described above we find the genre of warrior stories called the Inaros Cycle, which are all set in the 7th century BC when Assyria invaded Egypt.⁴⁷² The earliest historical reference to Inaros is found in Assurbanipal's (668-27 BC) prisms A and C, which contain a list of Delta princes and their cities that were established by the king when he came to power after his father Esarhaddon.⁴⁷³ Prism A lists twenty princes, and Prism C only preserves the first six names of Prism A, but changes the fifth name from Bokennife of Athribis to a prince [---]a-u of Athribis, which has been restored as [Inar]os of Athribis by Joachim Quack,⁴⁷⁴ i.e. Bokennife's name was changed to his successor's name, Inaros. This reading places the source as the only extant contemporary historical documentation of Inaros of Athribis, and fits with the tradition in the cycle that identifies Inaros as the son of Bokennife.

Thus Inaros may be historically identified as the grandson of Petese who ruled Athribis in the eastern Delta when the Kushite invasion of king Piye (747-656 BC) took place, and the son of

⁴⁷² The following summary of Inaros' historicity and the Assyrian rebellion are described in Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A Survey of the Narrative Source Material," In *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, 482-510. T. Holm, "The Sheikh Fadl Inscription in its Literary and Historical Context," *Aramaic Studies* 5, (2007): 193-224. See also: Ryholt, "Egyptian Historical Literature from the Greco-Roman Period," In *Das Ereignis: Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Vorfall und Befund*, 230-38; M. Chauveau, "Inarôs, prince des rebelles," In *Res severa verum gaudium: Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65. Geburtstag am 8. Juni 2004*, 39-46; J. F. Quack, "Inaros, Held von Athribis," In *Altertum und Mittelmeerraum: die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante. Festschrift für Peter W. Haider zum 60. Geburtstag*, 499-505. For references on the Saite period, cf. §(3.5).

⁴⁷³ Text and analysis: H-U. Onasch, *Die assyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens*, 61-129 & 147-54.

⁴⁷⁴ Text: H-U. Onasch, *Die assyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens*, 37. Restoration of Inaros' name: Quack, "Inaros, Held von Athribis," In *Altertum und Mittelmeerraum: die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante. Festschrift für Peter W. Haider zum 60. Geburtstag*, 499-505, especially 501-2.

Bokennife who ruled Athribis when the Assyrian invasion of king Esarhaddon (689-69 BC) took place.⁴⁷⁵

Subsequently,⁴⁷⁶ when Esarhaddon's son Assurbanipal (668-27 BC) came to power, a group of the local rulers had already sworn allegiance to Assyria,⁴⁷⁷ including Inaros' father Bokennife in Athribis, and five other rulers, five of whom also play part in the Inaros cycle. Of these rulers, three are known to have held royal titles: Necho I (672-64 BC), the father of Psammetichus I from Sais (664-10 BC) who liberated Egypt from the Assyrian control, Petubastis (exact date unknown) who ruled from Tanis in the north-eastern Delta, and Wenamun of Natho. The remaining rulers who did not hold royal titles are Pekrur of Per-Sopdu in the eastern Delta (south of modern Zagazig), Nehka of Herakleopolis, and Nakhthornashen of Per-Sopdu-na-iaty located somewhere between Memphis and Letopolis. The Kushite king, Taharqa, had temporarily replaced these rulers. But when Assurbanipal came to power, he forced Taharqa to the South, and reinstated the aforementioned rulers.

However, some of the vassals, including Necho and Pekrur, and presumably also Inaros, attempted to form alliance with Taharqa in a rebellion against the Assyrians. Inaros' involvement is unattested, but one of the Inaros stories places Necho, Pekrur, and Inaros together against the Assyrians.⁴⁷⁸ As Ryholt suggested, the rebellion probably took place when Inaros replaced his father Bokennife, and the episode in the narrative would thus commemorate the historical rebellion by the three rulers.⁴⁷⁹ The plot was, however, discovered by Assyrian agents and Necho was sent in chains to Assyria as a captive of Assurbanipal, but Pekrur seems to have escaped this fate. When the Assyrian king returned to Egypt in order to deal with the rebellious rulers, he was received by a delegation headed by Pekrur offering him subjugation. What happened subsequently is not revealed by the sources.

The cycle is accordingly set in the 7th century BC. It commemorates the historical rebellion by the rulers, especially, Necho, Pekrur and Inaros as the ones who had played a major role during the Assyrian occupation. In the stories, Pekrur has the epithet "chief of the east" (*p3 wr 'Bb.t*), and Inaros is referred to with various epithets including "king" (*nsw*) and "lord of the lance" (*p3 nb in-iw*). They are both chiefs of their clan who fight side by side against the Assyrians, they both die a heroic death,

⁴⁷⁵ Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A Survey of the Narrative Source Material," In *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, 489.

⁴⁷⁶ The following reconstruction of events is based on: Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A Survey of the Narrative Source Material," In *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, 483-510.

⁴⁷⁷ For the listed rulers, see note 473; for their identities and their role in the Inaros Cycle, see note 472.

⁴⁷⁸ *The Inaros Epic*, discussed below with references.

⁴⁷⁹ Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A Survey of the Narrative Source Material," In *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, 486.

and they both have sons in the stories, Petichons (Pekrur's son) and Pemu (Inaros' son) who themselves are great warriors and have key roles in the plots that are set after the death of Inaros.

(4.4.1) The Extant Texts

The earliest extant narrative about Inaros is recorded on a fifth century BC Aramaic inscription written in a cave of a Middle Kingdom tomb located in the vicinity of Sheikh Fadl (c. 160km South of Fayoum).⁴⁸⁰ The narrative mentions Inaros, Necho of Egypt, Taharka of Kush, Esarhaddon of Assyria, and Psammetichus. The text is too damaged to explore, but groups the abovementioned historical figures in a narrative frame. The Aramaic story conforms to the same tradition found in the Demotic stories, which places Necho I and Inaros as contemporary historical figures: the stories as a group either take place during Inaros' lifetime, or after his death. This text may be paralleled with the Aramaic story about the magician Horus son of Pwensh,⁴⁸¹ which is the earliest extant story about the magician about whom stories survive in Egyptian. Both Aramaic stories date to the 5th century BC and are linked to Egyptian narrative tradition. This circumstance suggests that certain Egyptian narratives were known in a broader multicultural context.

The stories set after Inaros' death are: *Contest for the Benefice of Amon*⁴⁸² from the first century BC from Thebes of which a second century version was identified from the Tebtunis temple library⁴⁸³ demonstrating the longevity of the story. *Contest for the Armor of Inaros*⁴⁸⁴ that dates to the second century

⁴⁸⁰ N. Giron, "Note sur une tombe découverte près de Cheikh-fadl par M. Flinders Petrie et contenant des inscriptions araméennes," *Ancient Egypt* 8, (1923): 38-43. A. Lemaire, "Les inscriptions araméennes de Cheikh-Fadl (Égypte)," In *Studia Aramaica: New Sources and New Approaches, Papers Delivered at the London Conference of The Institute of Jewish Studies University College London, 26th-28th June 1991*, 77-132. New edition of text: in: B. Porten and A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt. Volume 4: Ostraca and Assorted Inscriptions*, text TAD D 23.1: pp. viii, 286-298, and pls. 5-8. A comprehensive description of the sources on Inaros is also in: Holm, "The Sheikh Fadl Inscription in its Literary and Historical Context," 193-224.

⁴⁸¹ cf. §(2.5.4).

⁴⁸² pSpiegelberg: W. Spiegelberg, *Der Sagenkreis des Königs Petubastis: nach dem Strassburger demotischen Papyrus sowie den Wiener und Pariser Bruchstücken Hinrichs*. Zauzich, "Neue literarische Texte in demotischer Schrift," 38. F. Hoffmann, "Der Anfang des Papyrus Spiegelberg: ein Versuch zur Wiederherstellung," In *Hundred-gated Thebes: Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period (P.L. Bat. 27)*, 43-60.

⁴⁸³ pCarlsberg 433 + pTebt. Tait 2 verso: J. Tait, *Papyri from Tebtunis in Egyptian and Greek (P. Tebt. Tait)*, 14-20. J. Tait, "P. Carlsberg 433 and 434. Two Versions of the Text of P. Spiegelberg," In *The Carlsberg Papyri 3: A Miscellany of Demotic Texts and Studies*, 59-82. pCarlsberg 483 is unpublished: preliminary remarks are in:

⁴⁸⁴ pKrall: Hoffmann, *Der Kampf um den Panzer des Inaros. Studien zum P. Krall und seiner Stellung innerhalb des Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus*. Hoffmann and Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur*. Münster, 59-87.

AD, from Fayoum also with parallels in the Tebtunis temple library.⁴⁸⁵ The third story *Petechons and Sarpo*⁴⁸⁶ is from around the second century AD from Soknopaiu Nesos, also in the Fayoum region.

Stories that are set during Inaros' lifetime are awaiting publication. Among these are: *Bes Story*,⁴⁸⁷ *Inaros Epic*,⁴⁸⁸ *Contest for Inaros' Diadem and Lance*,⁴⁸⁹ and one story about the living Inaros, which has proven to be one of the longest extant manuscripts so far identified.⁴⁹⁰ Another manuscript, which does not name Inaros, but shares similarities with the cycle, is *Castration Story*⁴⁹¹

(4.4.2) The Stories and Homeric Influence

In light of the evidence discussed above, it appears that stories about Inaros were already known in the 5th century BC. It is not possible to determine where the stories originated, but the geographic distribution suggests that they circulated in the south, middle and north of Egypt, placing the narratives as part of a literary tradition that was sustained for more than 700 years. The many adventurous stories about the exploits of Inaros and his clan thus constitute the largest connected group of narrative literature from ancient Egypt. The Fayoum region, particularly the Tebtunis temple library, has so far been the richest source for the cycle, and in this region at least, it was the most popular genre in the Roman period.

The themes of the extant stories vary, but mainly involve the outbreak of a conflict that results in a great war. War and combat is common in Egyptian literary tradition. Examples include the episode in the Middle Egyptian *Tale of Sinuhe* where the protagonist fights against the "strong one" (*nh*t) of Retjenu (135-42), and the Late Egyptian *Capture of Joppe*, where general Djehuti captures the city of Joppe for king Thutmosis III (*LES*, 28-85). As a theme, war is predominantly found in the New Kingdom royal accounts such as the *Battle of Megiddo* and *Battle of Kadesh* (see below). Accordingly, war is not novel to Egyptian literary tradition. However, the Inaros cycle stands out in several aspects one of which is that the battles are fought between the Egyptian clans as well as against foreign enemies.

⁴⁸⁵ pCarlsberg 456 and pCarlsberg 456 and several other fragments mentioned: Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*.

⁴⁸⁶ pVienna D 6165 + pVienna D 6165a: F. Hoffmann, *Ägypter und Amazonen, Neubearbeitung zweier demotischer Papyri P. Vindob. D 6165 und P. Vindob. D 6165 A*. Hoffmann and Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur*. Münster, 107-17.

⁴⁸⁷ pCarlsberg 205: Hoffmann and Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur*. Münster, 55-9.

⁴⁸⁸ pCarlsberg 68+123 + pTebt. Tait 1, pCarlsberg 80, pCarlsberg 164: For preliminary remarks, see Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A Survey of the Narrative Source Material," In *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, 492ff.

⁴⁸⁹ Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 89-102.

⁴⁹⁰ Around 500 fragments from the Vitelli papyrological Institute in Florence identified by Kim Ryholt and myself, and will be published by myself in the near future.

⁴⁹¹ Salim, "Story of Crime and Castration (Papyrus Carlsberg 448)".

Internal wars between clan members as a theme is a unique and unprecedented aspect of Egyptian literary tradition from earlier periods, and in its own right, the image of a celebrated warrior is completely contrasted in the Late Egyptian portrayals of the soldier in for example pLansing (LEM, 99-116), where he is compared to a laboring “donkey,” who drinks water every third day, and has a weak and worn out body (101ff).⁴⁹²

The battle scenes in the cycle form the longest sections of the stories and include extended and detailed accounts of warriors getting ready for combat, their armors, the battle formations, clashes on land as well as at sea. This is another unparalleled aspect of Egyptian fiction, which suggests that these scenes comprised the climax of the narratives. In the accounts, warriors embrace *death* as a “friend” and *life* as the “enemy,” and they express great distress if they are not allowed to fight. Large parts of the combat scenes are dedicated to describing the one-on-one combats between the warriors, frequently initiated with the adversaries cursing and insulting one another. Another important feature of the stories is that hardly any of the warriors obey the commands of the ruling pharaoh, as opposed to pharaoh’s role in defeating the enemy being the main focus in royal accounts. In the cycle, the warriors are a category in their own right who fight and win their battles independently from the king.

This nature of the Inaros cycle has lead some scholars to consider whether it had been produced under Homeric influence:⁴⁹³ as discussed above, Homer’s epics were particularly popular in Greco-Roman Egypt. Demotists have so far either entirely refused the idea, or only cautiously suggested the possibility of Greek influence in the stories. The following section sketches the main issues raised by these scholars.

A good starting point is the article by Thissen concerning the question of Homeric influence in the cycle.⁴⁹⁴ The author addresses some of the questions raised by Hoffmann⁴⁹⁵ and Tait.⁴⁹⁶ Hoffmann completely rejects any Homeric influence in the cycle and argues that the two ethnic groups, i.e. Egyptian (priests/authors) and the Greeks, practiced their scholarly tradition in isolation and that the

⁴⁹² cf. S. Jäger, *Altägyptische Berufstypologien*. Translation in Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume II: The New Kingdom*.

⁴⁹³ Earliest: A. Volten, "Der demotische Petubastisroman und seine Beziehung zur griechischen Literatur," In *Akten des VIII. Internationalen Kongresses für Papyrologie, Wien, 1955*, 147-52. Also: A. Almásy, "The Greek Subliterary Texts and the Demotic Literature," In *From Illahun to Djeme: papers presented in honour of Ulrich Luft*, 1-6.

⁴⁹⁴ H.-J. Thissen, "Homerischer Einfluss im Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus?," *SÄK* 27, (1999): 369-87.

⁴⁹⁵ Hoffmann, *Der Kampf um den Panzer des Inaros. Studien zum P. Krall und seiner Stellung innerhalb des Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus*, especially 113ff. Hoffmann, *Ägypter und Amazonen, Neubearbeitung zweier demotischer Papyri P. Vindob. D 6165 und P. Vindob. D 6165 A*.

⁴⁹⁶ Tait, "Demotic Literature and Egyptian Society," In *Life in a Multi-cultural Society. Egypt from Cambyes to Constantine and Beyond*, 303-10.

Egyptians did not have access to Greek schools.⁴⁹⁷ He thus claims that the author of *Contest for the Armor of Inaros*, was not familiar with Homer.⁴⁹⁸ Thissen⁴⁹⁹ reminds Hoffmann of the evidence of Homeric literary exercises in Egyptian context.⁵⁰⁰ Some of the main issues addressed by Hoffmann are the motifs of dueling, the Amazon warriors, and daemons that influence the warriors. Concerning the first motif, which, as noted is most common in the narratives, Hoffmann finds parallels in the combat scene between Sinuhe and the “strong one” mentioned above, thus placing the episode within an Egyptian literary tradition.⁵⁰¹ Thissen argues that the context is neglected here and that Sinuhe’s battle has a different meaning than the duels in the cycle: while Sinuhe is an estranged Egyptian fighting against a foreign chief, the warriors in the cycle are princes who fight against each other.⁵⁰² To this may be added that the fights form the basis for proving superiority and worth in combat skills. This will be discussed in detail in the next section. The second question concerns the Amazon warriors. In *Sarpot and Petechons*, Petechons, who is the son of Pekrur, Inaros’ closest ally, campaigns in Syria where he encounters the queen Sarpot who rules over the “land of the women” and her army of women. On the “land of the women,” Hoffmann states: “Entsprechend wurden die den Ägyptern geläufigen Vorstellungen von einer Herrscherin und kriegerischen Frau weiterverarbeitet: Unterstützt von der Komplementarität, jetzt nicht mehr zu dem einen König, sondern zur normalen, von einem männlichen Herrscher regierten Welt, konnte leicht ein ganzes Land von Frauen unter einer Königin gedacht werden.” Here Thissen calls to mind that “land of the women” is analogous to the Egyptian conception of *αμαζονες* “Amazon”. Finally, with regards to the motif of daemons that are sent out by the god to manipulate the course of events: in *Contest for the Armor of Inaros*, Osiris is offended that his cult is being neglected and sends out two daemons to possess Pemu (Inaros’ son) and Wertiamonniut, son of Anchhor, in order that a war between the two clans should begin. Hoffmann singles out the motif stating that in comparison, it only occurs in one of the stories of the cycle,

⁴⁹⁷ However, in subsequent work Hoffmann appears to favor a view that Egyptian narrative tradition influenced the Greek Romance. F. Hoffmann, *Ägypten. Kultur und Lebenswelt in griechisch-römischer Zeit. Eine Darstellung nach den demotischen Quellen*.

⁴⁹⁸ Hoffmann, *Der Kampf um den Panzer des Inaros. Studien zum P. Krall und seiner Stellung innerhalb des Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus*, 116.

⁴⁹⁹ For the discussion, see: Thissen, "Homerischer Einfluss im Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus?," 369-87.

⁵⁰⁰ Thissen, "Homerischer Einfluss im Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus?," 380.n. 52. Thissen mainly argues against the “ägyptozentrische” methodology of Hoffmann, which, for example excludes a broader contextualization of the narratives, focuses on isolated passages, and compares comapres the Demotic text with the verse structure of the Iliad to determine whether the text was written in hexameters and thus influenced by the Iliad.

⁵⁰¹ Hoffmann, *Der Kampf um den Panzer des Inaros. Studien zum P. Krall und seiner Stellung innerhalb des Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus*, 86.

⁵⁰² Thissen, "Homerischer Einfluss im Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus?," 379.

whereas the gods constantly interfere amongst humans in the *Iliad*.⁵⁰³ In response, Thissen points to the circumstance that literature may be “influenced” in certain aspects, which does not automatically imply that it is “dependent” on the source of its influence: Virgil’s *Aeneid* was an epic poem influenced by Homer but not dependent on it, and other works have been inspired by e.g. the works of Shakespeare but are not dependent on them.⁵⁰⁴ Demotic literature should, accordingly, be interpreted within its “international context:”⁵⁰⁵ i.e. the daemon episode may be influenced by the *Iliad*, but need not follow its construction in detail.

It may thus far be established that the Inaros cycle is distinguishable from earlier Egyptian narrative tradition and especially from the royal annals and that the motifs of Amazons and daemons that interfere with humans may well be influenced by epic motifs, especially the former motif. The following section, *The Stories*, will narrow down this influence predominantly to epic poetry. But before doing so, some further comments on the genre and the “heroic” aspect of the protagonists are in order.

Tait⁵⁰⁶ is less persuaded that Greek concepts chiefly influenced the creation of the stories: “It seems likely that at least a few of the Inaros texts were written with an awareness of the Homeric poems. They take some very general ideas from Homer [...] and work this up into a narrative within Egyptian traditions. Beyond these broad ideas, the plots pay little regard to what actually happens in Homer, and the texts have virtually no interest in reproducing anything of the outlook or style of the Homeric poems... That the stories are all more or less concerned with the deeds of heroes and with fighting may be a general feature either taken from Homer or in which it was intend to follow Homer.”⁵⁰⁷ On the theme of *Contest for the Benefice of Amon*, he notes: “dispute over the rightful possession of a priesthood, is a traditional Egyptian one” accordingly he finds that: “the link with Homer seems casual, almost incidental.”⁵⁰⁸ On the same note as Tait, Quack⁵⁰⁹ ascribes the stories to a purely Egyptian origin, although he does not entirely reject Greek influence in the manuscripts of later date, finding Hoffmanns’ statements rather exaggerated.⁵¹⁰ As Vittmann,⁵¹¹ Quack recognizes the Greek concept of

⁵⁰³ Hoffmann, *Der Kampf um den Panzer des Inaros. Studien zum P. Krall und seiner Stellung innerhalb des Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus*, 54.

⁵⁰⁴ Thissen, “Homerischer Einfluss im Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus?,” 382.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ Tait, “Demotic Literature and Egyptian Society,” In *Life in a Multi-cultural Society. Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, 303-10.

⁵⁰⁷ Tait, “Demotic Literature and Egyptian Society,” In *Life in a Multi-cultural Society. Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, 310.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ J. F. Quack, “Gibt es eine ägyptische Homer-Rezeption?,” In *Odysee-Rezeptionen*, 55-72.

⁵¹⁰ J. F. Quack, “Gibt es eine ägyptische Homer-Rezeption?,” In *Odysee-Rezeptionen*, 56.

⁵¹¹ G. Vittmann, “Tradition und Neuerung in der demotischen Literatur,” *ZÄS* 25, no. 25 (1998): 66ff. this was already noted in Volten’s publication of *Petechons and Saport. A. Volten, Ägypter und Amazonen. Eine demotische Erzählung*

Amazon warriors in *Sarpot and Petechons*. But with regards to the “heroic” character of the protagonist in the cycle, Quack suggests that it originated from the values of the rulers of Libyan descent from the 22nd-24th dynasties (10th-8th century BC),⁵¹² rather than from Homer’s epic.⁵¹³ He thus argues that the audience of the cycle originated amongst people who perceived themselves as part of the pharaonic tradition: the narratives were, during the course of time, revised and new compositions were created (with some Greek influence), but he does not find any individual episodes in the texts that suggest a reproduction of Homers *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.⁵¹⁴ Thissen notes that the aspect of warrior princes in charge of respective cities and clans with a central government that is deficient is unprecedented in earlier narrative tradition and, as popular as epic poetry was in Hellenistic-Roman tradition, this particular pattern is confined to Homer’s *Iliad*, which further places the cycle within an Homeric context.⁵¹⁵

According to Thissen,⁵¹⁶ Egyptian language is qualified to produce epic poetry and the question is rather whether there was a need for it since it is based on certain conditions: memories of a heroic age.⁵¹⁷ In this context, Ryholt argues that Demotic stories, which share the common aspect of concerning historical figures, constituted the Egyptian perspective on its native history: they are historical texts.⁵¹⁸ For example, the *Contest of Inaros’ Armor* reproduces the civil unrest of the 7th century from a mythological perspective. Accordingly, the narrative explains why the war was instigated between the two native clans in the first place: because the ceremonies of the Navigation of Osiris were not properly conducted, resulting in the fury of the god, who then causes the war between the two clans to begin through sending daemons to possess the leaders of the two clans. But had not the cult been neglected, there would have been peace. On the same note, Michael Meyer’s definition of “epic” in *The Bedford Introduction to Literature* may be added: “a lengthy narrative poem, ordinarily concerning a serious subject containing details of heroic deeds and events significant to a culture or nation” (2005: 2128). Thus the Inaros cycle may be placed within a framework that commemorates native bygone warrior heroes and reflects on an indigenous history at the same time. Simultaneously, as stated by

des Inaros-Petubastis-Kreises aus zwei Papyri der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek (Pap. Dem. Vindob. 6165 und 6165A).

⁵¹² The dynasty of Libyan descent that retained their own way of doing things: unaccustomed to centralized rule, they were organized as a confederation of principalities allied to one another through marriage and appointment of family members to important posts, especially military, cf. A. Leahy, “The Libyan Period in Egypt: An Essay in Interpretation,” *Libyan Studies* 16, (1985): 51-65.

⁵¹³ Quack, “Gibt es eine ägyptische Homer-Rezeption?,” In *Odysee-Rezeptionen*, 56. Also K. Jansen-Winkel, “Die Fremdherrschaften in Ägypten im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.,” *Orientalia* 69, (2000): 9ff.

⁵¹⁴ Quack, “Gibt es eine ägyptische Homer-Rezeption?,” In *Odysee-Rezeptionen*, 57.

⁵¹⁵ Thissen, “Homerischer Einfluss im Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus?,” 383.

⁵¹⁶ Thissen, “Homerischer Einfluss im Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus?,” 382.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ cf. note 177 for references on Egyptian historical literature from Greco-Roman Egypt in relation to the three periods of national trauma, i.e. the Hyksos era, the Amarna age, and the Assyrian domination of Egypt.

Latacz: “The real purpose of Homer is not history, but poetry- great poetry for the sake of great effect. To speak with Aristotle, the real purpose of Homer is ἡδονή [entertainment].”⁵¹⁹ I propose combining both functions. As shown above, many priests in the Fayoum region became part of the Greek speaking elite who associated with their Hellenic surroundings outside the temple. Similarly, many of the indigenous Egyptians who were recruited in the army in the Ptolemaic period became part of a Hellenized veteran group, especially in Fayoum from where many narratives survive. Fayoum seems a particularly ideal environment for the popularity of these texts and perhaps the many Inaros manuscripts from this region are not as coincidental as one might think. As will be shown, Homeric epic formed an essential frame of reference in constructing (literary) warrior identity in the Hellenistic culture. I believe that this function may also be attributed to the Inaros cycle for the Hellenized Egyptians, including the veterans. The function of the cycle is thus not a single one, but has multiple layers among which are: serving as historical literature on the one hand and as entertainment on the other.

I understand the compositions as a result of authors’ adaptation of Hellenic narrative schemata. This implies that pre-existing Egyptian literary concepts of soldier and combat expanded to accommodate epic notions of the hero and his attributes, resulting in a new stream of literary texts. To illustrate this point is the concept of *pr-ꜥ*, which literally means “going forth of arm”, but generally, translated as “Hero” (“Held:” *Wb.* 1, 527). Examples of the concept and what it encompasses are the Stela of Mesu from the Second Intermediate Period (17th- 16th century BC): “I am one excellent toward his siblings, a hero for his clan”;⁵²⁰ Sety I’s inscription (13th century BC) in Abydos, in which the king describes himself: “My (i.e. Sety I) strength was protection for his (i.e. Ramses I) body in countries the name of which was not known. I was a strong hero before him, so that he became aware of my perfection,”⁵²¹ and *Battle of Kadesh* of Ramses II where the king is a hero, with no equal. (*pr-ꜥ iwty sn.w=f*).⁵²² The epic hero is adapted to such a frame of reference. Inaros becomes the warrior (*rmt knkn*) who is efficient in the battlefield, and protector of his clan.

⁵¹⁹ J. Latacz, “Between Troy and Homer: The so-called Dark Ages in Greece,” In *Storia, Poesia e Pensiero nel Mondo antico. Studi in Onore di M. Gigante*, 362. Quoted in Thissen, “Homerischer Einfluss im Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus?,” 385.

⁵²⁰ Line 7: *Pr-ꜥ n mhwt=f*. B. Porter and R.L.B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings*, Vol. 5, 205 [B]. S. Kubisch, *Lebensbilder der 2. Zwischenzeit: Biographische Inschriften der 13.-17. Dynastie*, 216-17, pl. 6a.

⁵²¹ Line x+7. Literal translation: “I made for him my strength/arm as protection for his limbs in countries the name of which was not known, so that he opened his eyes to my goodness” (*ir=i n=f hps=i m mkw.t hꜥ.w=f hr h3s.wt n rh.tw rn=sn ir=i pr-ꜥ kn m b3h=f r wn=f ir.t=f hr nfr.w=i*): *KRI* I, 110-14; G. Lefebvre, “Inscription dédicatoire de la chapelle funéraire de Ramsès I à Abydos,” *ASAE* 51, (1950): 167-200.

⁵²² e.g. § 7: 3: *pr-ꜥ iwty sn.w=f*. The poem: *KRI* II, 2-101. For a translation, e.g. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume II: The New Kingdom*, 57-72.

The function of the stories as historical texts need not imply that the authors and audience felt less Hellenized and that they only functioned within an indigenous environment. On the contrary, I find that the provenance of the texts, being kept in the temple, substantiates the representation of the priests as the source of knowledge, which has been discussed in the previous chapters: the temple was the source of indigenous history written in the native language, and the access to that information was through the priests in their capacity of being bilingual, as the only individuals who could transmit the contents of the manuscripts: this could also explain why such stories were exclusively written in Demotic as opposed to other types of text in this period such as the magical text which were composed to suit Hellenic use (4.3.2). Thus we find the priest as the source of knowledge on Egypt and its past: an image that agrees with the portrayal of the priest in literary texts discussed in the previous chapter and also reflected in the frequent citing of priests as the source of information in the Greek Histories. In this context, I find it likely that the stories circulated beyond the temple walls,⁵²³ and the fact that the stories are solely written in the native script and language suggests that the priests were the ones involved in *transmitting* the stories to the outside world rather than being their only *audience*.⁵²⁴ From a literary perspective it may be framed thus: Priests were the *cultural* heroes of Egypt, while Inaros and his clan were the *martial* heroes of Egypt.

(4.5) The Stories

Contest for the Armor of Inaros and the *Contest for Inaros Diadem and Lance* share the common theme: a dispute about the claim to Inaros' personal weapons after his death. In the former story Inaros' son Pemu and Wertiamonniut, the general of Mendes, engage in a war that involves all the clans because Wertiamonniut had unrightfully gained hold of Inaros' armor, which had been in Heliopolis with Pemu. In the second story, *Contest for the Lance and Diadem of Inaros*, a kalasiris has gotten hold of Inaros' diadem and lance and Pekrur's son, Petechons, demands the objects back.

With these stories in mind, it would be safe to conclude that Inaros' armor, lance, and diadem, i.e. heroic belongings, had an immense value and that these objects had their appointed guardians who kept them in certain locations. It is therefore in order first to examine what the texts reveal about these objects before addressing the motif within a broader context.

⁵²³ Examples of Egyptian stories transmitted in Aramaic and Greek have been given in § (2.5)

⁵²⁴ For priests as the only audience for the stories, see Tait, "Demotic Literature and Egyptian Society," In *Life in a Multi-cultural Society. Egypt from Cambyes to Constantine and Beyond*.

(4.5.1) The Armor of Inaros

Although a full description of Inaros' armor is not preserved in any manuscript, an impression of how it may have looked may be deduced from the descriptions of Pemu, his son's and Pekrur, his ally's, armors in *Contest for Inaros' Armor*. The portrayal of Pemu's armor is unfortunately much damaged. It begins with a detailed description from the moment the suit of armor was laid on a mat before the prince and each item he reaches for, until the suit is fully assembled. The scene occupies twenty lines on a page of an average of 30 lines, which is a rather long passage (12, 25-13,17). The kilt was of first class byssus and decorated with *mny*-stones. A part of the armor that covered Pemu from the navel to the thighs was made of gold and had rims of red leather. On his back, part of the armor was decorated with ten flowers in the center, which were made of silver and gold. Further parts of the armor, which are also made of byssus, gold, and iron, including his helmet, are described. The undergarments were made of fine wool and other costly materials. His scale armor had strings of fine iron, and a decoration with grasshopper and camel images. Further references are made to depictions of gods and goddesses of combat, which are the work of a "skilled artist." His shin guards were of silver and some of their parts were made of wool, and red leather was on a part that covered his feet. His sandals were braided, and red leather is mentioned again. The remaining lines are even more damaged, but some words are identifiable: leather, ebony, malachite, and gold with a reference to a lioness, presumably another figure on the armor.

The passage would have sounded more or less as the following much shorter description of Pekrur's armor, i.e. Inaros closest companion:

The Great of the East, Pekrur, came outside, girded with a suit of mail threaded with fine iron (bnpy nfr) (and) greaves of pure silver. He was armed with a battle sword (sfy knkn), measuring 45 [...] of iron, and his hly-sword (of) a man of the East, was of shiny steel from its grasp to its top. He was holding a lance [from] Arabia two thirds of which was [of wood?] and one of iron. A shield of gold was in his hand. The Great of the East, Pekrur, stood in the middle of the army of Egypt between the two [arrays] of shields (i.e. the two opponent groups). He spoke, in a high voice, crying out loudly: "Up, general Wertiamonniut! You're the opponent of General Pemu the young, the son of Inaros"

*(Armor, 18, 22-31)*⁵²⁵

⁵²⁵ Philological analysis: Hoffmann, *Der Kampf um den Panzer des Inaros. Studien zum P. Krall und seiner Stellung innerhalb des Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus*, 336ff.

From a comparative perspective, the passages convey a mode of describing the armor suits, which gives the audience a visual perception of its entire appearance: the material: gold, silver, and so on, the swords, the decorations of war motifs on the shields and even reaching for and putting on each item. This literary device is unprecedented in earlier Egyptian fiction and is unique to the Inaros cycle. It is a method of description referred to as *Ekphrasis* in Greek: a rhetorical device, which dramatically and vividly describes a visual work of art in a manner that relates more directly to the audience. In *Iliad*, ekphrasis is particularly used when Homer describes the shield of Achilles, going to great lengths in Book 18: 485 in relating its complete shape and decoration, and how Hephaestus had made it.⁵²⁶ From the shield's center and moving outwards, the circle layers were decorated with the earth, sky, sea, sun, moon, and the constellations (484–89). Two “beautiful cities full of people,” with daily life scenes in one and a besieging in the other, formed the image in the second circle (490–540). The third circle had an image of a field being ploughed (541–49) while the fourth had a scene of harvest being reaped in a king's estate (550–60). In the fifth circle there was an image of a vineyard with grape pickers (562–72) and in the sixth, an image of a herd of cattle where a pair of lions had attacked the lead bull (573–86). The seventh and eighth circle had an image of a sheep farm (587–89) and images of young men and women dancing (590–606) and finally, the great stream ocean formed the outer circle of the shield (607–9). The parallelism here lies in the length to which the author goes to describe the weapon of the greatest hero. It is the same literary technique that was presumably adapted to describe the weapon of Pemu and presumably also of his father Inaros thus rendering their heroic value. Accordingly, I understand the scenes in the Inaros cycle from this perspective of ekphrasis: an Egyptian adaptation of this rhetorical device. The images of the grasshoppers, camels, lions, gods and goddesses would have represented scenes recognizable to the audience such as battle scenes, and images of war gods and creatures related to warfare. A comparable episode in *Iliad* is the scene where king Agamemnon is reaching for his armor suit:

The greaves first he set about his legs; beautiful they were, and fitted with silver ankle-pieces; next he did on about his chest the corselet [20] that on a time Cinyras had given him for a guest-gift (...) Thereon verily were ten bands of dark cyanus, [25] and twelve of gold, and twenty of tin; and serpents of cyanus writhed up toward the neck, three on either side, like rainbows that the son of Cronos hath set in the clouds, a portent for mortal men. And about his shoulders he flung

⁵²⁶ cf. A. S. Becker, *The Shield of Achilles and the Poetics of Ekphrasis*.

his sword, whereon gleamed [30] studs of gold, while the scabbard about it was of silver, fitted with golden chains. And he took up his richly dight, valorous shield, that sheltered a man on both sides, a fair shield, and round about it were ten circles of bronze, and upon it twenty bosses of tin, [35] gleaming white, and in the midst of them was one of dark cyanus. And thereon was set as a crown the Gorgon, grim of aspect, glaring terribly, and about her were Terror and Rout. From the shield was hung a baldric of silver, and thereon writhed a serpent of cyanus, that had [40] three heads turned this way and that, growing forth from one neck. And upon his head he set his helmet with two horns and with bosses four, with horsehair crest, and terribly did the plume nod from above. And he took two mighty spears, tipped with bronze; keen they were, and far from him into heaven shone the bronze; [45] and there at Athene and Hera thundered, doing honour to the king of Mycenae, rich in gold
(*Iliad*: 11, 15-45)⁵²⁷

Thus, it may so far be concluded that describing the armor suits of Pemu and Pekrur in the Demotic cycle of Inaros stories formed an essential part of the story which adapts ekphrasis as a literary tool of illustration. Inaros' armor would have been as extraordinary as that of his son Pemu, if not more. But Inaros' armor was not only a visual splendor; it also had a significance in warrior culture as a symbol of authority in combat skills.

(4.5.2) The Cultural Significance of the Armor of Inaros

Inaros armor belongs to a distinctive warrior clan to whom there is no equal in Egypt: "There is no warrior clan in Egypt like the clan of Osiris, king Inaros" (*Armor* 17, 16-17).⁵²⁸ In fact, a story about the living Inaros from the Carlsberg collection includes a scene in a feast in which Inaros asks for his armor to be brought (pCarlsberg 606 vs.).⁵²⁹ Unfortunately, the text is damaged and only one column remains of it, but the lines mention Inaros' armor being brought to him during the feast, after which he mentions how Egypt's neighbors in the [East], West, North and South, had been turned into "vassals" (*b3k*), every single one of them (pCarlsberg 606 vs. 9-10). Could this manuscript have included a story-within-a-story concerning the role which the legendary armor had played in subjugating Egypt's enemies? It wouldn't be surprising if it did, and one immediately recalls the episode in *Armor* in which Pemu likewise relates how he had single-handedly defeated the Assyrian enemy (5, 7-11). Unaided,

⁵²⁷ This translation from Perseus Digital Library: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>

⁵²⁸ *mn mhw.t n rmt knkn hn Kmy m-kdy t3 mhw.t wsir nsw Tr.t-Hr-r.r=w*

⁵²⁹ Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 23-30.

Pemu had jumped into the midst of the Assyrian army when it attacked Egypt causing “slaughter” (*h3*) and “destruction” (*wty*) among them (*Armor* 5, 8-9), thus saving pharaoh from the humiliation of defeat because no “warrior” (*rmt knkn*) can surpass the “art of combat” (*sb n mšs*) of any man of Inaros’ clan (*Armor* 2, 6-7). The martial skills were thus this family’s pride and were passed down from generation to generation: both father and son had subjugated the greatest enemies of Egypt, while the ruling king had no role to play in this circumstance.⁵³⁰

The fame of Inaros and his clan had even passed the borders of Egypt: “your (Inaros’) name has been heard in the districts of the entire world and in the horizon before Re, in the underworld before Osiris, and in Punt before Amun, because of your strength of might and your marvel as a warrior.”⁵³¹ A parallel to this description includes Inaros’ fame reaching India.⁵³² Inaros, “lord of the lance, as well as his clan, “sons of the lord of the lance,”⁵³³ were thus by the Roman period the top warriors of Egyptian literary tradition. Accordingly, in *Sarpot and Petechons*, the queen of the Amazons, Sarpot, realizes that the enemy facing her is Petechons, the son of Inaros’ closest ally Pekrur. She becomes struck by panic because stories about Petechons had already reached her regions in Assyria: “Help me, O Isis, great goddess, and Osiris, great god, and [...] the great gods! The evil snake (*p3 hf bn*) of Egypt is here. For many days one made us hear (stories) about him. [He went to war (or sim.)] against (the) king, against the land of Syria (i.e. Assyria). He fights with one chief today, and defeats another tomorrow. [...] If his (i.e. Petechons’ opponent) gods could [not] resist (i.e. defend against) him (i.e. Petechons), will we (ever) be able to?” (*Petechons and Sarpot*, 2, 22-5). In this scene, Thissen noted that Sarpot calls for Egyptian gods for help and draws attention to an Isis aretology contemporary with the manuscript of *Petechons and Sarpot*, in which the text states that Isis is “warlike” among the “Amazon.”⁵³⁴ Accordingly, the narrative follows a practice that re-labels the manifestations of Isis in terms of Greco-Roman qualities and goddesses.⁵³⁵

The constellation of the heroes is, accordingly, Inaros and Pekrur, the leaders of the clans, and their two sons Pemu and Petechons. Inaros’ armor had defeated all the countries surrounding Egypt from Nubia to Assyria to Persia and even India and represents the superiority and recognition of the clan as the greatest warriors of Egypt.

⁵³⁰ For king Petubastis see (3.5)

⁵³¹ pCarlsberg 80: *w3h=w sdm rn=k hn n3 tš.w n p3 t3 dr=f irm t3 3h.t m-b3h P3-R t3 tw3.t m-b3h Wsir P3-wny m-b3h Imn db p3y=k nh t n nnty irm p3y=k hply n rmt-knkn*: Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 82.

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ *Armor*, 17, 10.

⁵³⁴ pOxy. 11 1380:102-3 (2nd century AD): Thissen, “Homerischer Einfluss im Inaros-Petubastis-Zyklus?,” 379.

⁵³⁵ D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance*, 100.

(4.5.3) The Appropriate Location of the Armor of Inaros

With regards to the legitimate keeper and location of Inaros' armor after his death, it may be established that it was to remain in the possession of his son Pemu in his house in Heliopolis: "Wertiamonniut, let the armor of Osiris King Inaros be returned to its place. Let it be brought to Heliopolis to the house of Pemu, the place from which you brought it in the first place!"⁵³⁶ If the armor is not returned to its rightful place, that is in the city of his clan among his people in the house of his son, it would be considered a disgrace for the clan in the entire land of Egypt: "Will we be able to go to Heliopolis without having brought the armor of the prince Inaros (back) to our nome and our own village, while our shame is in the entire of Egypt?"⁵³⁷ These passages illustrate a principle that Inaros' relics belong with his son, among his clan and descendants as a symbol of honor. To have the armor taken away from the clan is a symbol of humiliation, not only for his family, but also for the entire nome. This is substantiated by the fact that each clan member in the story puts on "mourning clothes" (*hbs.w n pky*) when they learn that the armor has been removed from its place and is in the possession of Wertiamonniut.⁵³⁸

A similar conclusion may be drawn from the stories concerning Inaros' diadem and lance, which illustrates that the weapons were transmitted from the warriors to their offspring. In the story (pCarlsberg 125v.), Inaros' closest ally, Pekrur, is dead and his son Petechons buries him in Nubia in the precinct of the temple of Horus in Biugem. Petechons demands the return of Inaros' diadem and lance from a kalasiris, and although it is not explicitly stated in the very fragmentary remains of the story (only a few lines from two columns remain), it is plausible that the diadem and lance were inherited by Pekrur and after his death and burial the objects were supposed to be inherited by his son Petechons. But the kalasiris gets hold of the diadem and lance. The reason for this appears to be that Petechons had permitted that his father be buried in Nubia and not in Egypt in the city of his birth. Subsequently, the kalasiris feels entitled to the objects:

He (i.e. the kalasiris) said: My son Petechons! To me belongs the diadem and the lance of Inaros. Have you brought your father, the Chief of the East Pekrur to let him rest in Biugem and will you

⁵³⁶ *Wr-ty-Imn-niw.t inwe t3 hlybš wsir nsw Ir.t-Hr-r=w my st3.t=s r p3y=s m3c my t3y=w s r Twnw r n3 c.wy n P3-mi [r] n3 m3c r.in=k s r-bnr n.im=w, Armor, 9/2-3*

⁵³⁷ *Armor, 9, 28-9: in iw=n rh r sm r Twnw r-bn-pw=n t3y t3 hlybš n p3 rp3y Ir.t-Hr-r=w r n3y=n tš irm n3y=n dmy h.t=n r p3y=n spy hpr hn Kmy dr=f.*

⁵³⁸ Pemu 4, x+12; the entire clan: 5, 4; Pekrur: 6, 7; Pekrur and Pemu: 7, 27.

*let him be a stranger to Egypt, the place of where he was born? My son, Petechons, he does not have a companion [from] the places where he was born. (Diadem and Lance, 2, 16-22)*⁵³⁹

It thus appears that Pektur had died in Nubia, and Petechons, by not bringing his father's body back to be buried in his city of birth, had broken a tradition and lost his right to the diadem and lance. This attitude towards one's city of birth and the importance of being buried in Egypt is already a literary motif in the Middle Egyptian story of *Sinuhe* where the estranged hero's homecoming in order to be buried in Egypt frames the happy ending of the story. An Egyptian burial, proper mortuary preparation, mummification and entombment, represented the deceased's assimilation to Osiris, while the tomb alter represented the location through which family members communicated with their ancestors and vice versa. As the king tells Sinuhe: "You shall not die in a foreign land, and Asiatics will not escort you (i.e. procession to the tomb). You shall not be placed in a ram's skin as they make your grave. All of this is too much for one who has roamed the earth. Take thought for your dead body and return."⁵⁴⁰ Sinuhe and Pektur would thus be estranged from the traditional mortuary practice, which would have a consequence on the permanence of their existence in the world of the dead. The burial of Pektur in Egypt thus conforms to an ideology that has persisted in Egyptian tradition for centuries and enforces the notion of native affiliation. In the cycle, the dead hero is buried in his city, where his "companions" are to honor his funerary cult. Subsequently, his weapons are handed over to his clan as long as they preserve this veneration. That these principles go hand in hand is further suggested by the episode in which Pemu refused the king's proposal to make a splendid re-burial for Inaros, as a consolation for Pemu's loss of his father's armor, as long as it was not in its proper place with him.

(4.5.4) Reclaiming the Armor of Inaros

A final remark regarding Inaros' legendary weapons is the manner through which their rightful owner retrieves these objects. In both *Armor* and *Diadem and Lance*, the only honorable way to acquire the objects is through proving one's worth through exceeding the opponent in combat and martial skills. This principle is illustrated when Pemu asks Wertiamonniut in the presence of pharaoh whether he had

⁵³⁹ 2, 16-22: *dd=f p3y=y šr P3-di-Hnsw [in]ky p3 hry irm p3 in-nw n Ir.t-Hr-r-r=w in w3h=k in p3y=k it p3 wr i3bt P3-kll r di.t htp=f n B-Wgm mtw=k di.t ir=f šm^c [r] Kmy p3 m3^c n ms.t=f r.[ir=w] p3y=y šr P3-di-Hnsw bn-iw mtw=f hnw [hn] n3 m3^c.w n ms.t=f. This translation in: Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 95.*

⁵⁴⁰ 197-9. Translation from: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 62. Consider also the social importance of the city, which is reflected in for example the New Kingdom texts of praise for the city. The speakers here long for cities such as Memphis and Thebes and express their longing in a romanticized manner, see. e.g., C. Ragazzoli, *Éloges de la ville en Égypte ancienne: histoire et littérature*.

obtained the armor through the “might of his power” (*p3y=k nht.t n nmtj*) or through “surpassing [Pemu] in martial skills” (*tḳn n sbꜥ n mšs*, *Armor* 7, 8-9). If Wertiamonniut had fought against Pemu for the possession of the armor and established his superiority in combat, he would have been entitled to the armor. This code is recognized in both texts, i.e. *Armor* and *Diadem and Lance*. In the former, pharaoh suggests that the two clans should remain at peace and that he will make Wertiamonniut return the armor. Pemu replies:

*By Atum, the great god! When the armor is given to me, it will not be brought to Heliopolis without my having taken it through combat. It is because of it (i.e. the armor) that the lance is raised (i.e. war) and the army of the entire land recognizes it (i.e. the fact). I shall go in the name of my lord Inaros and I shall take his (i.e. Wertiamonniut) armor to Heliopolis.*⁵⁴¹

(*Armor* 9, 28-30)

As a result, when the war ends with Pemu’s victory, the armor of Hareunakht, the ancestor of Wertiamonniut and the people of Mendes (*Armor*, 19, 31), is handed over to Pemu along with Inaros’ armor. Wertiamonniut is thus disgraced in Egypt (*Armor*, 25, 23). In *Diadem and Lance*, the lance and diadem are returned to Petechons after a fight with the kalasiris in which the former’s strength as a great warrior is established. “He (i.e. Petechons) made battle (*ḳnḳn*) with [the kalasiris ... The moment] this happened, [the kalasiris] proceeded away from [him.] He [realized] that he had gained advantage over him in a skill of fighting. He, (i.e. the kalasiris) made a truce between himself and Petechons.” (*Diadem and Lance*, 9-12)⁵⁴²

Possessing Inaros’ weapons is thus a symbol of warrior superiority. Losing the weapons means that this superiority can be questioned. Therefore, the only right way to reclaim the weapons of the legendary Inaros is through repossessing it in a contest of combat skills.

(4.5.5) Contextualization of the Motifs

To sum up, the cycle of Inaros stories is a distinct genre in its own right. The stories, as a whole, disclose principles of fame and portray the Homeric virtues of the heroes, which include strength, skill, physical courage, fleetness of foot, combat skills, competitiveness, and honorable conduct. Inaros was a king, a prince, a great warrior (*rmt ḳnḳn*), and his equal had never existed in Egypt. No one surpasses

⁵⁴¹ *nhꜥ Itm p3 ntr ꜥ3 r.iw=w di.t n3.w=y t3 hlybš r.bn-iw-n3.w t3y.t=s r Iwnw r.bn-pw=y t3y.t=s n ḳnḳn r.ir. p3 in.iw ꜥhꜥ hn Kmt tb3.t=s mtw p3 mšꜥ p3 t3 tr=f gm.t s iw=y mš3 n rn p3y=y hryꜥ Ir.t-Hr-r-r=w mtw=y t3y t3y=f hlybš r Iwnw*

⁵⁴² Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library*, 95.

him in the art of combat (*sb n mšs*) and his name is known beyond the borders of Egypt. The same fame and might belong to his clan, particularly his son Pemu, his closest ally Pekrur, and the latter's son Petechons. These clan members demonstrate their qualities in Homeric patterns: as they "slaughter their foes they demonstrate these qualities before their public, the other heroes on both sides, and so establish their claim to relative rank."⁵⁴³ An example of this code of conduct before the audience is in *Benefice*: 15, 20ff.:

Then rose one of the 13 shepherds, saying, 'I have come to you, you southerner, (you) Nubian, resin-eater of Elephantine!' He armed himself. He jumped ashore. He struck. He fought with Minnemei on the upper side of the bark of Amun from the first hour of the morning till the eighth hour of the evening, while pharaoh and the army of Egypt watched them as each displayed his combat skills, none of the two being able to defeat the other.

The dead heroes are buried in their native towns near their companions, where their cult is to be honored and maintained. Inaros' armor is passed down to the members of his clan, which is a symbol of honor to be protected by its owner. Superiority in combat skills is the only rightful manner through which Inaros' legendary armor can be obtained and if it chances that it is taken from its keeper, the only way to worthily retrieve it is through proving one's superiority in combat. When it is retrieved and the authority of the warrior who had reclaimed it is proven, the defeated party in return is stripped of his armor as a sign of defeat. Stripping the defeated party of the armor is a warrior code in the *Iliad*.⁵⁴⁴ Thus in the same manner as in the epic: "it is not that epic attributes to the warriors a system of values that concords with their way of fighting; rather, they are depicted as fighting in a way that accords with their ethics (...) [Accordingly the] Epic wraps a way of describing fighting around a set of beliefs..."⁵⁴⁵ For example in *Sarpot and Petechons* the two warriors fight around a principle in which "They beheld death as a companion and life as an [enemy]." (*Sarpot*, 3, 46ff.). Here the warriors take pride in dying in the battlefield, which may be compared to Iliadic principle with which the warriors enter the battles: they have no fear of death, and rather see it as a welcomed friend as opposed to life. Such is the depiction of death in the battlefield in the *Iliad*: "When a young man falls by the sword in battle, he may lie where he is and there is nothing unseemly; let what will be seen, all is honorable in death" (*Iliad*, 22: 70-75).

⁵⁴³ J. E. Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts. A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, 24.

⁵⁴⁴ J. E. Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts. A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, 149.

⁵⁴⁵ Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts. A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, 28.

The Inaros cycle of stories comprises Homeric portrayal of the hero within an overall Egyptian composition. The status of Inaros' armor as a weapon belonging to a royal figure, a martial champion, who was honored amongst his fellow champions, is comparable with the same image of Achilles, his shield, and his status amongst his warriors.

I propose to consider the cycle as a genre, which, as Homer's epic, had a significant value in forming warrior identity as well as historical literature. This function of Homer's epic is also attested in the histories of Alexander the Great who is said to have identified with Homer's heroes. The alleged preoccupation with Homer has been interpreted as a literal device by which Alexander and the Ptolemies consolidated Greek group identity among non Greek-subjects,⁵⁴⁶ while at the same time conforming the perspective that the elite, conscious of their status, modeled themselves on predecessors (real or imagined).⁵⁴⁷ As Marincola argues, this means that "sometimes the literary echoes in a historian will have arisen from the fact that his subject was actually seeking to call up previous historical actors: the 'intertextuality' here was the doer's not the writer's (or at least not wholly the writer's)."⁵⁴⁸ Accordingly, Alexander and his epic heroism is attested in many sources:

And since he thought and called the Iliad a viaticum of the military art, he took with him Aristotle's recension of the poem, called the Iliad of the Casket, and always kept it lying with his dagger under his pillow.

*(Plutarch, Alex. 8:2)*⁵⁴⁹

When Alexander had defeated the Persian king Darius:

A small coffer was brought to him, which those in charge of the baggage and wealth of Darius thought the most precious thing there, he asked his friends what valuable object they thought would most fittingly be deposited in it. And when many answered and there were many opinions, Alexander himself said he was going to deposit the Iliad there for safe keeping. This is attested by many trustworthy authorities. And if what the Alexandrians tell us on the authority of

⁵⁴⁶ M. Finkelberg, ed. *The Homer Encyclopedia. Volume III*, 876.

⁵⁴⁷ J. Marincola, "The 'Rhetoric' of History: Intertextuality, and Exemplarity in Historiographical Speeches," In *Stimmen der Geschichte: Funktionen von Reden in der antiken Historiographie*, 287.

⁵⁴⁸ J. Marincola, "The 'Rhetoric' of History: Intertextuality, and Exemplarity in Historiographical Speeches," In *Stimmen der Geschichte: Funktionen von Reden in der antiken Historiographie*, 266.

⁵⁴⁹ *LCL* 99, vol. 7.

Heracleides is true, then it would seem that Homer was no idle or unprofitable companion for him in his expedition.

(Plutarch, Alex. 26)

One of the most important sources on Alexander the Great's campaigns, *Anabasis of Alexander* (= the Expedition of Alexander)⁵⁵⁰ by Arrian (2nd century AD), relates that the first town the Macedonian king visited in his campaign in Asia Minor was Troy, i.e. the setting for the Trojan War of the epic. In the temple of Trojan Athena, Alexander made a sacrifice and dedicated his armor to the goddess. In exchange he took down a display of arms said to date back to the Trojan War. He then sacrificed to Priam, king and ancestor of the Trojans, in order to appease his vengeful ghost because Alexander himself was a descendant of Neoptolemus, son of Achilles who had killed Priam at the sack of Troy (Arrian, *Anab.*, 1.11:5). A parallel account is described in Plutarch (*Alex.* 15: 8-9), adding that Alexander also made offerings at the tombs of the Achaeaeen heroes, and paid respect to Achilles, anointing his tombstone and running a race by it with his companions, as was the custom. He then crowned it with a wreath, pronouncing the hero "happy in having, while he lived, a faithful friend, and after death, a great herald of his fame." In Philostratus' (3rd century AD)⁵⁵¹ *Heroikos*, set at the tomb of the first hero to fall in the Trojan War, Protesilaos, a dialogue between the spirit of the hero and the caretaker of his tomb is recorded in which the former reveals his insights about Homer, the Trojan War, its heroes, and their cults. In the text, the dead hero recalls how Alexander had made Achilles his ally in Troy while marching against Darius (Philostratus, *Her.* 9:1-3).

Subsequently, when Alexander fought against the Persians, his victory was partially ascribed to his heroic armor obtained from the temple of Trojan Athena, as well as his own heroic battle skills (influenced by Homer). In the battlefield, the king was seeking out the Persian heroes in order to obliterate them in single combat just as Achilles had Hector, son of Priam, champion of the Trojans. As a testimony to his Iliadic heroism, Alexander took two blows to the breastplate, one in the helmet, and three upon the shield. Allegedly, the king had this battered armor carried before him as a reminder in his later battles (Armor; Diodorus, 17:18:1 and 21:2; Arrian, *Anab.* 1:11:8).

On a daily basis, the sources further recount that Alexander's tutor had found favor at the Macedonian court by identifying the members of the royal family with Homer's heroes. Alexander became Achilles, King Philip became Peleus, Achilles' father; and Alexander's tutor became Phoenix, the tutor of Achilles (Plutarch, *Alex.*, 5). Another source adds that Alexander's friend Hephaestion

⁵⁵⁰ LCL 236, vol.1.

⁵⁵¹ Flavios Philostratus, *On Heroes*.

became Patroclus, who was Achilles' closest companion in the epic. It further relates that when Hephaestion died on Alexander's campaign in the East, the Macedonian king had mourned the death of his friend just as Achilles had mourned Patroclus in the *Iliad*: Alexander cut off his hair over the body and sacrificed human flesh to the shade of his companion dragging an enemy leader behind his chariot around the walls of a city, in the same manner as Achilles had the dead Hector.⁵⁵²

Together these sources implicate several cultural functions of Homer's epic. Most important is the fusion of Alexander the Great and his warriors with the epic heroes of Homer, which reveals that it formed an essential frame of reference in constructing (literary) warrior identity in the Hellenistic culture, which "intertextually" survived in the histories as well. Even Alexander's battle methods were said to have derived from Homer's epic, thus explaining its development into a professional military with many specialized troops, organized in advantageous positions on the battlefield.⁵⁵³ In such a context, a better understanding may be gained with regards to Inaros' armor, diadem and lance, which form important items disputed between the clans, by drawing upon the portrayal of the very same objects belonging to Alexander:

(...) Everything needed was quickly made ready, for the royal treasure was rich in gold. Straightway then, when a magnificent tent had been set up, the throne was erected, upon which were placed the diadem, the sceptre, and the armour that Alexander had been wont to use. Then when an altar with a fire upon it had been put in place, all the commanders would make sacrifice from a golden casket, presenting frankincense and the most costly of the other kinds of incense and making obeisance to Alexander as to a god.

(Diodorus 61:1)

Alexander the Great's immortalization and the significance of his armor, diadem, and lance may be paralleled to the importance of the similar objects that had belonged to Achilles and Inaros.

Epic was, consequently, conceived as an important guide to the intellectual mindset of the educated Greek and an inspiration for warriors: a mirror into which they looked to see themselves.⁵⁵⁴ This tradition was accommodated in Egyptian literary construction of warrior identity, from the onset of the

⁵⁵² Tutor: Plutarch, *Alex.* 5:5; Hephaestion: Arrian, *Anab.*, 7:14:2; Human sacrifice: Plutarch. *Alex.*, 72:3.

⁵⁵³ Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts. A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, 122ff.

⁵⁵⁴ Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts. A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, 124.

encounter with the Hellenistic culture, resulting in the “creation” of the indigenous historical heroes of Egypt. Further parallels may be observed in the overall constellation of the heroes in the Inaros cycle and the *Iliad*. As Alexander and Hephaestion were paired with Achilles and Patroclus, both heroic warriors who honorably died on the battlefield, and who were close friends, the same pattern may be traced in the Inaros cycle with Inaros and Pektur who were close friends who both also died in battle. Substantiating this hypothesis, I find further similar patterns in *Posthomerica* where Achilles’ son, Neoptolemus, and Pemu, Inaros’ son, both share some important characteristics within an almost identical motif. In *Posthomerica* (book 5),⁵⁵⁵ Achilles had died, and a feud between Odysseus and Telamonian Ajax begins for the ownership of Achilles armor. The two warriors compete by giving speeches on who fought best to protect Achilles body and thus is the bravest warrior after Achilles. The consensus turns out to be in favor of Odysseus who then presents the armor to Neoptolemus. The similarities in the Demotic and Greek texts lie in the value of the fallen hero’s armor, the conflict concerning its ownership, and its return to the hero’s son in the end. The means by which the armor is obtained is, on the other hand, very different. While the Greek episode applies one of the most important aspects of Hellenistic culture as the means of retrieving the hero’s weapon, i.e. poetic speech, the Egyptian story applies the principle of superiority in strength as the only way to regain the objects. This represents an inversion of traditional Egyptian values of royal conduct, which are in complete opposition to the view that words are mightier than any battle.⁵⁵⁶ The concept of good speech is otherwise a very well known theme in Egyptian literature,⁵⁵⁷ and the Inaros cycle thus further stands out as a genre that encompasses untraditional concepts and principles.

A final remark should be made with regards to the motif of the Amazon queen in the story of *Petechnos and Sarpot*.⁵⁵⁸ In the story, Petechnos, Pektur’s son, is campaigning in Assyria where he encounters the Amazon queen Sarpot. When she sees the Egyptian army camped nearby, Sarpot sends her younger sister disguised as a man to spy on the Egyptians. After finding out the intention and identity of Petechnos, Sarpot prepares for battle against him. In the first clash between the armies, Sarpot and her female soldiers are so fierce that they cause much bloodshed and turmoil among the Egyptians and both armies then retreat to their respective camps. The next day the two warriors, Petechnos and Sarpot, meet in the battlefield and engage in a duel. They fight bravely and forcefully until nightfall.

⁵⁵⁵ The date of Quintus of Smyrna’s *Posthomerica* is not definitely established. The current *communis opinio* is the 3rd century AD, which is contemporary with the date of the manuscript of *Armor*. See: C. A. Maciver, *Quintus Smyrnaeus: Engaging Homer in Late Antiquity*, 3. Text: LCL 19.

⁵⁵⁶ *Instruction of Merikare*, maxim 32. Recent edition: Quack, *Studien zur Lehre für Merikare*.

⁵⁵⁷ cf. note 303 for references.

⁵⁵⁸ See discussion of the designation “Amazon” and the Greek motif noted by Volten (4.4.2) with references.

(The two heroes are preparing for battle against each other). They set their lances before them. They cast their shields across their [shoulders]. [...] abuse, the language of warriors (i.e. they are insulting each other). They beheld death as a companion and life as an [enemy]. [...] duel. (So) skilled were their strikes, (and so) clouding their blows [...] effort. They flew to the sky like vultures, they came down to the ground as [...] They began the attack as panthers. They were like [...] son of Sobek. The ground echoed [...] by the [...], by confusing, by striking, by jumping. No one gave the other way. [...] again. No one gave the other way. The fight [lasted from the] time of the first hour of the morning to the [... hour] of the evening.

(Sarpot, 3, 46-4, 5)

The two warriors then agree to take a break and continue fighting later. At some point the two heroes see each other's faces, presumably as they take off their helmets, and fall instantly in love with each other:

She could not find a place on earth on which she was (i.e. she was beside herself) because of the great love that took hold of her (lit. entered). [At the moment] the prince [Petechnon] himself [saw her] he did not find a place on earth on which he was.
(Sarpot, 4, 26-27)

Although the text is much damaged towards the end, it appears that at some point the two warriors join forces against the Indian king who is now attacking the land of the women, but the story breaks off at this point.

The passages described above and the story as a whole contains several epic concepts that are worth mentioning. First, as mentioned earlier, is the clear reference to *death* as a *companion* and *life* as the *enemy* in battle, which I have interpreted in light of the warriors taking pride in dying on the battlefield as a parallel to the principle of honorable death in the *Iliad*.⁵⁵⁹ But perhaps the most interesting aspect is the constellation of characters: the Amazon queen and Petechnon the warrior, and the love scene between

⁵⁵⁹ Furthermore, the episode reveals an inversion of principles where a positive image of a foreign warrior as one who prefers death to life is expressed as opposed to a negative one. Comparison may be drawn to, for example, the Libyans in royal inscriptions who are negatively portrayed for desiring death rather than life. For example King Piye continues the traditional representation of Libyans found in Ramseside inscriptions. The king warns the warriors: "Do not bar the gates of your life so as to confront the slaughter block of this day! Do not desire death so as to hate life! [choose] life in the presence of the entire land." This translation in: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 377. Text: N.-C. Grimal, *La stèle triomphale de Pi(ankh)y au Musée du Caire. JE 48862 et 47086-47089*.

the two, which echo Pseudo-Appolodorus' *Bibliotheca* 5:1 (2nd century AD):⁵⁶⁰ Penthesilea arrives at Troy and promises the Trojans that she will kill Achilles. After clashing with Telamonian Ajax with no victor, she comes face to face with Achilles who eventually kills her with one blow through her breastplate. When Achilles removes her helmet, he is so touched by her beauty and falls in love with her (Book 1). The motif of Peteichons and Sarpot immediately falling in love on the battlefield is very similar to the Greek account. The differences lay in the endings of the stories: the Greek one has a tragic ending that is absent in the Egyptian version. I understand this circumstance in light of reformulating the motif to fit Egyptian literary tradition. Rather than dying, the Amazon queen joins forces with Peteichons against the Indian king thus providing the audience with the traditional "happy ending." This is further interesting because it suggests that some properties of Greek literature were too remote to adapt in Egyptian narratives: there is no Egyptian narrative to my knowledge that has a "tragic" ending.

Ryholt places *Sarpot and Peteichons* as a story based on Alexander the Great and his exploits,⁵⁶¹ for example reaching India, certainly places Peteichons on a par with Alexander the Great. It may be added to this observation that the narrative frame, i.e. the protagonists and the meeting between Sarpot and Peteichons, which lead to the subsequent encounter with the Indian forces, are modeled after an epic theme. Although Alexander is also said to have met the Amazon Thalestirs who, according to one tradition, stayed with him for 13 days in order to conceive a child from him (e.g. Diodorus: 17:77, Strabo, 11:5), which is reminiscent of the Sarpot/Peteichons motif, it should be kept in mind that the epic still formed the essential part in forming such rendering of warrior history: "epic made the Greek past irreducibly past, and so rather than envisaging the past as the present, they tended rather to understand the present by means of the past. When a Greek sculptor wished to allude to the great wars between Greeks and Persians, he tended instead to depict the combat between the Greeks and Trojans or between Greeks and Amazons, mythic warrior-women, or the combat between the Greek Lapiths and the bestial Centaurs, themes elaborated from epic."⁵⁶²

⁵⁶⁰ *LCL*, 121.

⁵⁶¹ Lecture. Conference: Sesostriis - Scheschonq - Sesonchosis: Ein internationaler Held und sein Nachwirken 14-16.09.2012 at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität.

⁵⁶² Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts. A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, 37.

(4.6) Conclusion

The present chapter has considered the Inaros cycle from a contemporary cultural context that takes the negotiation of Hellenistic and Egyptian traditions, which took root in Egypt from the onset of the Ptolemaic period, into perspective. Within this cultural encounter, several aspects of tradition were opened to change while others remained unaffected. Examples from different aspects of society, which support this hypothesis, have been given, such as name changing, learning Egyptian in order to teach it to Greek speaking workers, and tomb decorations that display signs of cooperation between Egyptian and Hellenistic forms. Here, the native priests had an important part to play as chaperons for the new ruling power who in return ensured the durability of their positions and status. Furthermore, space was given to the native Egyptian in this period to climb the social hierarchy. This was particularly fruitful for the Egyptian soldiers, who became part of the kleruchic system who gained great wealth and became part of the Hellenized Greeks-speaking class. This class is well documented in the Fayoum region, from which many Inaros stories have survived of Roman date.

With Roman rule came the principle of descent, which was an important factor in distributing important resources. Ethnic consciousness, at least if one wished to climb the social hierarchy, was thus increased. In the metropoleis, various cultural and religious traditions signifying Hellenistic identity were preserved and practiced, especially literature, theatre and the gymnasium, even though many of the inhabitants of these towns did not qualify as Hellenic. The richest sources of Greek literary traditions are Oxyrhynchus and the Fayoum region, where classics and new compositions were read, copied and performed, and where Homer and his epics remained an important educational reference. Here, although the priesthood and its institution were reduced in size and number, the temple of Tebtunis remained the “famous, tax-exempt temple.” In this region, it has been shown that many priests became part of the Greek speaking elite who associated with their Hellenic surroundings outside the temple. It is also from this temple that many of the Inaros narratives survive, and Fayoum, thus, appears to be a particularly ideal environment for the popularity of these texts: perhaps the many Inaros manuscripts found here is not as coincidental as one might think: seeing that both temple and region housed an indigenous, but highly Hellenized elite to whom the Inaros cycle could have formed an important narrative tradition.

The present chapter has also argued that the financial decline of the Egyptian temple under Roman rule forced many priests to seek new venues for exercising their traditional authority, which resulted in their assimilation to Hellenistic “stereotyping.” The priests thus extended indigenous priestly and scribal traditions to alien markets, accordingly reaffirming Hellenic notions of the “exotic” Egyptian priests. As a consequence, temple traditions were rearranged to suit Hellenistic taste, “new” spells (in

Greek as well) were composed, and Egyptian traditions fitting with the newcomers' needs were created, while the priesthood simultaneously promoted their authority by virtue of their archaic history. In literature, Greek and Latin texts portrayed the Egyptian priest in complete opposition to his image in contemporary Egyptian narratives. Here, the dominating portrait of the priest is as a magician who practiced his skills for money, but the "skills" themselves conform to native Egyptian traditions. Examples include customary motifs of the priest as controlling animals, giving life to inanimate objects, and being an expert in divination and astrology.

On the other hand, the encounter between the Hellenic and Egyptian culture resulted in the development of a new genre, namely the Inaros cycle. This genre is unattested in earlier Egyptian literary tradition, a fact I understand to be a result of Egyptian adaptation to the Hellenic notion of the hero exemplified by the expression "going forth of arm," "hero."

The cycle retained many traditional native characteristics, the most important of which is the Egyptian language in which the texts are written. Further Egyptian aspects are the historical setting of the texts in the 7th century BC with the last native dynasty of Egypt, as well as the heroes themselves who are all historical characters from that period and had played an important part in the war against the Assyrians. As a whole, however, the cycle is distinguishable from any earlier Egyptian narrative: Inaros and Pektur remind us of Achilles and his companion Patroclus. The value of Inaros' armor, the conflict concerning its ownership, and its return to the hero's son are all paralleled in Achilles' shield, Odysseus and Ajax' quarrel over its ownership and its return to Neoptolemus, Achilles son. Motifs of Amazons, and daemons that interfere with humans, warriors who contest before an audience all together suggest that the compositions were mainly structured with epic poetry as the main influence. But as Thissen pointed out, influence does not automatically imply dependence. Consequently, some motifs were simply not "accepted" in this adaptation of epic literature, such as the tragic death of the lovers, and motifs are thus re-interpreted and altered in a manner that makes more sense to the Egyptian author/audience.

With regards to reception, the present chapter has argued that the priests need not have been the only audience for the narratives. On the contrary, it interprets the strictly Egyptian language in the texts as a conscious choice ensuring that the priesthood remained the only individuals able to transmit the contents of the manuscripts outside the temple. In this respect, the priest would have been the source of knowledge on Egypt and its past, which is a concept that agrees with portrayals of the priest in Egyptian literary tradition discussed in the previous chapters. The Inaros cycle may accordingly be placed as historical literature transmitted by the priesthood to their surroundings. From a comparative perspective, however, I have argued that Greek epic was influential in forming warrior identity for the

Hellenistic elite. I have also argued that a Hellenized group of indigenous Egyptian warriors lived in the Fayoum region for many generations. In this respect I find it possible to add a function to the cycle, which is consistent with its Hellenic value for the warriors: as a mirror through which they saw themselves. Finally, I have also discussed epic poetry as “great poetry for the sake of great effect” and, provided as an example, the adaptation of ekphrasis as literary tool for describing Pemu’s armor. Such a tool would have been one way to achieve a “great effect” in the narratives.

(5) Literary Portrayals of women

(5.1) Introduction

It is my impression that Egyptological research on the topic of women has branched out into separate areas of focus, the results of which have not extensively been considered within a comparative context. For example, studies that focus on the economic and legal status of women have placed the ancient Egyptian woman on a par with her male companion (except for her not appearing as a witness).⁵⁶³ This aspect has hardly been compared to the construction of women's identity in, for instance, a literary context.⁵⁶⁴ Accordingly, studies that focus on literary constructions of female identity often refrain from addressing the subject within a broader cultural framework that contrasts results with other areas in Egyptology, in order to define similarities and differences within these subfields: for example, an evaluation of the different types of discourse regarding women is lacking within literature, the genre of wisdom texts, fictional narratives and judicial texts. Another problem when approaching the subject of representations of women in ancient Egypt is that several Egyptological studies do not include the Hellenistic and Roman periods, perhaps considering these as less culturally indigenous in nature.⁵⁶⁵ Where such studies do exist, their focal point tends to be the Greek material, which in return leaves us with conclusions that reflect representations of the Hellenic or Hellenized women of Egypt and not necessarily the indigenous woman adhering to Egyptian traditions. This is naturally influenced by several factors such as the circumstance that fewer Egyptologists in general are studying the Demotic material, as well as the lack of communication between Classicists and Egyptologists: as Pomeroy put it

⁵⁶³ e.g.: J. Johnson, "The Social, Economic, and Legal Status of Women in Ancient Egypt," In *The Life of Meresamun: A Temple Singer in Ancient Egypt*, 82-91; J. Johnson, "The Legal Status of Women in Ancient Egypt," In *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt*, 175-86.

⁵⁶⁴ For portrayals of women in literature, see e.g.: L. H. Lesko, "The Perception of Women in Pharaonic Egyptian Wisdom Literature," In *Ancient Egyptian and Mediterranean Studies*, 163-71; J. Dieleman, "Fear of Women? Representations of Women in Demotic Wisdom Texts," *ZÄS* 25, (1998); L. H. Lesko, "Women and Priests in Two Egyptian Stories," In *Hesed ve-emet. Studies in Honor of Ernest S. Frerichs*; P. M. Teyssie, "The Portrayal of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Tale" (Yale University, 1998). None of these studies include a comparative analysis with documentary sources and mainly evaluate the portrayal of women within the literary genre itself.

⁵⁶⁵ Middle Kingdoms, e.g.: W. Grajetzki, "Women and Writing in the Middle Kingdom: Stela Louvre C 187," *RdE* 60, (2009): 209-14. The author proposes that girls could participate in the informal home-schooling where fathers taught their boys; W. A. Ward, "Non-Royal Women and their Occupations in the Middle Kingdom," In *Women's Earliest Records from Ancient Egypt and Western Asia: Proceedings of the Conference on Women in the Ancient Near East*, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, November 5-7, 1987, 33-46. New Kingdom, e.g.: J. Toivari-Viitala, *Women at Deir el-Medina. A Study of the Status and Roles of the Female Inhabitants in the Workmen's Community during the Ramesside Period*. Greco-Roman period, e.g.: K. Vandorpe and S. Waebens, "Women and Gender in Roman Egypt: the Impact of Roman Rule," In *Tradition and Transformation: Egypt under Roman Rule. Proceedings of the International Conference, Hildesheim, Roemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum, 3-6 July 2008*, 415-35; S. B. Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt, from Alexander to Cleopatra*. In general for Ancient Egypt: G. Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*.

“...social historians interested in Ptolemaic Egypt ... would welcome more studies of the indigenous women by Demotists.”⁵⁶⁶

Since the diachronic aspect of literary development is an important aspect of the present dissertation, it would lie beyond its scope to include several literary motifs of women. Therefore, I narrow down the discussion to the two most common motifs in narrative fiction throughout the historical period, namely the “good” and the “bad” wife through linking three Egyptological fields pertaining to the subject: fictional narratives, instructions and documentary/judicial texts.

The main point of departure consists of the motifs of good and bad wife in narrative literature. Since this thesis has defined cultural identity as a the conscious reification of ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and practices, selectively extracted from social existence but also subject to variation, the diachronic aspect of the approach helps in defining change and permanence in the representations. I have also argued that cultural manifestations arise from society and are formed and conditioned by it, and that they also create and perpetuate these. By extracting the recurrence of motifs in narratives and comparing these with the wisdom texts and documentary sources, representations of the “ideal” as opposed to “bad” wife may be understood within a cultural context. This is based on the hypothesis that an audience makes sense of a text through a process of naturalization:⁵⁶⁷ “to naturalize a text is to bring it into relation with a type of discourse or model which is already, in some sense, natural and legible,”⁵⁶⁸ i.e. the construction of the reading process on the basis of a frame of reference with which the reader is familiar.⁵⁶⁹ These frames of references may derive from reality, i.e. concepts which govern our perception of the world, such as cultural conventions, each forming a label constituting an answer to questions such as: What is happening? What is the state of affairs? What is the situation? and so on.⁵⁷⁰ Accordingly, instructions, i.e. texts that have an ethical voice, and documentary sources, i.e. the actual behavior towards women, are relevant because, for a extinct pharaonic civilization, they serve as sources for the models of coherence: the cultural codes which constitute a system of values. This is the context I apply in forming a clearer understanding of the motifs of good or bad wife in narrative literature.

⁵⁶⁶ Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt, from Alexander to Cleopatra*, vii.

⁵⁶⁷ Culler, *Structuralist Poetics, Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*, 159.

⁵⁶⁸ Culler, *Structuralist Poetics, Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*, 138. Referred to as “Gestalten” in: W. Iser, “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach,” *New Literary History* 3:2 (1972): 279-299. “frame of reference” in: B. Hrushovski, *Segmentation and Motivation in the Text Continuum of Literary Prose: The First Episode of War and Peace*. “Intertextual frames” in U. Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*.

⁵⁶⁹ M. Perry, “Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings,” *Poetics Today* 1, (1979): 36.

⁵⁷⁰ M. Perry, “Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings,” *Poetics Today* 1, (1979): 43.

The present chapter begins with a brief overview of the terminology that constituted “marriage,” “husband,” and “wife,”⁵⁷¹ in order to form a better contextualization of the motifs. This is a complicated matter in its own right due to the “scarcity and laconic nature of the sources as well as problems connected with the interpretation of the concept [marriage] itself.”⁵⁷² Then two sections follow: one focuses on the good wife, the other on the bad wife. Each of these aspects is contextualized within two separate historical periods, namely before and after the 9th century BC, which is the period where marriage becomes institutionalized and “marriage contracts” make their appearance.

(5.2) Terminology

In interpreting the sources, especially with regards to the early periods of Egyptian history from which no actual “marriage contracts” survive, different traditions in different parts of the country may, in some cases, explain the inconsistency of the terminology. Moreover, the historically disconnected nature of the sources along with their imbalanced geographical spread do not allow for a full picture to emerge.

In general, the nature of the relationship between man and woman may be deduced from the designations of the women and men in the texts. “Married” women are referred to as “*ḥm.t*,” which is Coptic ⲭⲓⲙⲉ “wife” (*Copt. Dict.* 385) commonly used as the designation for a married woman, but it could also simply mean “woman.” Women who do not appear to be in such a relationship are most commonly referred to as “*šḥm.t*,” (old *s.t ḥm.t*) Coptic Ⲭⲭⲓⲙⲉ “woman” (*Copt. Dict.* 385). In Middle and Late Egyptian texts as well as Demotic “husband” would often be referred to as *h(3)y*, which corresponds to Coptic ⲭⲁⲓ (*Copt. Dict.* 636).

With regards to the association between man and woman, there are the expressions *ḥm.t t3y* (*Wb.* 4, 345) “wife of a man” as well as the expression *iw=s m-di NN* “(while) she is/was with NN.” (see below) The expressions are grammatically different: the former has the direct object “wife” indicating possession and narrowing the attachment of the woman to a certain man; the latter uses the preposition “with” suggesting a more detached characterization of the relationship between the man and the woman. Both expressions are extensively attested in the Deir el-Medina documents discussed below where men and women are accused of adultery. The Deir el-Medina sources convey the behavioral

⁵⁷¹ For marital relations, see e.g.: J. Johnson, “Sex and Marriage in Ancient Egypt,” In *Hommages à Fayza Haikal*, 149-59; J. Johnson, “Speculations on Middle Kingdom Marriage,” In *Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H.S. Smith*, 169-72; J. Johnson, “‘Annuity Contracts’ and Marriage,” In *For his Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer*, 113-32.

⁵⁷² J. Toivari, “Marriage at Deir el-Medina,” In *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3-9 September 1995*, 1153.

code that, regardless which of the idioms characterizes the relationship, monogamy was expected. In comparison with *h(3)y* “husband,” there seems to be a difference between the former and *t3y* “man.” the former appears to signify a “formal” characterization of a married man, while the latter, in the expression *hm.t t3y*, appears to indicate an “informal” classification of a man who *has* a woman. Generally speaking, the Deir el Medina documents suggest a formal designation *hm.t* and *h3y* “wife” and “husband,” and an informal but socially recognized relationship between a “man” and “woman” in the expression “she is with NN.”

In the 9th century BC “marriage contracts” appear in the historical records. However, any ceremonial activity or celebration that might have taken place when such unions were formed seem to have been located outside of the public sphere since no records of such proceedings are extant.⁵⁷³ In this context, there is an exceptional example in one story from the 2nd century AD that contains the phrase *hb n t3y hm.t* “celebration of taking a wife,” which is so far the only reference in narrative fiction to a “wedding celebration” and thus a unique portrayal of the social practice, at least in Roman Egypt.

With regards to the legal aspects of marriage, Pestman’s work⁵⁷⁴ presents a comprehensive outline of the documents concerning marriage that groups the texts according to their theme in an attempt to present an in-depth analysis of the sources. Several studies that followed Pestman’s revision focus on specific periods, locations, or types of texts.⁵⁷⁵ As a whole, legal documents that convey a written agreement between a man and a woman are extant from the 9th century onwards.

⁵⁷³ J. J. Janssen, “An Allusion to an Egyptian Wedding Ceremony?,” *GM* 10, (1974): 25-8; S. Allam, “An Allusion to an Egyptian Wedding Ceremony?,” *GM* 13, (1974): 9-11.

⁵⁷⁴ P. W. Pestman, *Marriage and Matrimonial Property in Ancient Egypt. A Contribution to Establishing the Legal Position of the Woman*.

⁵⁷⁵ A review of the publication on the subject of “marriage” in ancient Egypt is presented in; P. W. Pestman, *Marriage and Matrimonial Property in Ancient Egypt. A Contribution to Establishing the Legal Position of the Woman*, x. To these references may be added: S. Allam, “Quelques aspects du mariage dans l’Égypte ancienne,” *JEA* 67, (1981): 116-35; C. Eyre, “Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt,” *JEA* 70, (1984): 92-105; J. J. Janssen, “Marriage Problems and Public Reactions,” In *Pyramid Studies and Other Essays. Presented to I. E. S. Edwards*, 134-7; Johnson, “Sex and Marriage in Ancient Egypt,” In *Hommages à Fayza Haikal*, 149-59; Toivari, “Marriage at Deir el-Medina,” In *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3-9 September 1995*, 1157-63; T. Handoussa, *Mariage et divorce dans l’Égypte ancienne*.

(5.3) Middle and Late Egyptian Portrayals of the Ideal Wife

The earliest literary motif of the good wife is found the opening lines of the Middle Egyptian *Eloquent Peasant*.⁵⁷⁶

There was once a man whose name was Khunanup. He was a peasant of Sekhet-Hemat, and he had a wife (Hm.t) named Merit. Now this peasant said to his wife "look, I am going down to Egypt in order to bring provisions from there for my children (...) and then he set out for her six measures of barley. Then the peasant said to his wife "See, (there are) twenty measures of barley as food (for you) and your children. Now make these six measures of barley into bread and beer for me as daily rations, that I may live on them (i.e. while he is gone) (Peasant, 1, 1-6)⁵⁷⁷

The episode introduces to the audience a couple, Khunanup and his wife Merit. Although Merit does not occur anywhere else in the story, the audience is still provided with her name, *mr.t*, which means "beloved." Here, the text ascribes the wife a property in the story world which is reflected in her name: a literary tool known as characterization,⁵⁷⁸ linking her attributes with expressions such as "his beloved wife" (*hm.t=f mry.t=f*).⁵⁷⁹ Her husband will set off to bring provisions, not for himself, but for his children (later "your" children), which emphasizes his unselfish nature and his devotion to his social responsibility.⁵⁸⁰ The entire episode thus presents the audience with a model family life that is implicit to the audience and intertextually recognizable when considering teachings such as the Middle Egyptian *Instruction of Hordjedef*: "If you would be excellent, establish a household (*grg=k pr=k*) and acquire for yourself a caring wife; that a male child will be born to you."⁵⁸¹ A parallel can be found in the 21st maxim in the *Instruction of Ptahhotep*.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁶ For references to text editions and analysis see note 303.

⁵⁷⁷ This translation follows : Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 26.

⁵⁷⁸ S. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, 70.

⁵⁷⁹ Parkinson, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant: A Reader's Commentary*, 25.

⁵⁸⁰ Parkinson, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant: A Reader's Commentary*, 26.

⁵⁸¹ Maxim 1: see note 173 for references to text edition. Present translation in: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 127.

⁵⁸² See note 95 for references. Present translation in: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 139.

If you are excellent and establish your household (grg=k pr=k)/ Love (mr) your wife in accordance with what is fair.⁵⁸³ Feed her well, put clothes on her back/ Ointment is the balm for her body. Rejoice her heart all the days of your life, for she is a profitable field for her lord.

These maxims define a reciprocal association between husband and wife that is initiated when the relationship (i.e. household) is established. The husband's love (*mr*) for his wife is expressed through providing for her and treating her well (in accordance with what is fair). The good wife reciprocates through being a "profitable field for her husband," which I take to be a reference to her bearing children and minding the household that is now established. It is within such a frame of reference that the scene between the peasant and his wife reflects an ideal marital union.

This principle is echoed in a 19th dynasty letter from a husband to his deceased wife (pLeiden I, 371).⁵⁸⁴ In the letter, the husband is puzzled that some misfortune (unspecified in the letter) has befallen him. He ascribes this hardship to the interference of his wife from beyond the grave.⁵⁸⁵ The interesting aspect of the letter is its allusion to the same codes found in the literature discussed so far. For example, the author of the letter proclaims that he made the recipient of the letter his wife when he was a youth (*ir=i tw m hm.t iw=i m ʕdd*, l. 8), and that he had appropriately behaved [regarding] "her oil, bread, and clothes" (l. 23). He remained with her as a husband (*m h3y*, l. 3) without abandoning her (*h3ʕ*), providing her with every good thing without ever causing her to suffer (l. 19). These conditions which the husband describes mirror the principle of marriage expressed in the teachings. Thus, the husband's conduct was in accord with what was customary and endorsed: he had loved her in accordance with what was proper, having fed her well, clothed her back, provided for her ointment (the balm for her body) and rejoiced her heart (all the days of his life). Whether the husband actually acted according to his claims, we are in no position to say, but the letter does convey that he felt rather offended because, even though he had followed the rules of conduct between husband and wife, his actions were not reciprocated. Rather, his wife caused him hardship he did not feel he deserved.

⁵⁸³ *mri=k hm.t=k m-hnw hsb*. For *m-hnw hsp*, as a "sum," which is appropriate, see: G. Burkard, "Die Lehre des Ptahhotep," In *Weisheitstexte*, 201-2.

⁵⁸⁴ Text: A. H. Gardiner and K. Sethe, *Egyptian Letters to the Dead, Mainly from the Old and Middle Kingdoms*, 8-9, pls. 7-8., 8-9, pls. 7-8. Translation: Wenthe, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 216-17.

⁵⁸⁵ Letters to the dead follow this "structure" of the living declaring their good behavior towards the deceased when they were alive, as well as the maintenance of their cults in death, thus the composers of the letters may proclaim that there can be no reason that ill fortune should be allowed to strike them. For this practice cf. M. O'Donoghue, "The 'Letters to the Dead' and Ancient Egyptian Religion," *BACE* 10, (1999): 87-104; J. C. Moreno García, "Oracles, Ancestor Cults and Letters to the Dead: the Involvement of the Dead in the Public and Private Family Affairs in Pharaonic Egypt," In *Perception of the Invisible: Religion, Historical Semantics and the Role of Perceptive Verbs*, 133-153. See also; M. Guilmot, "Lettre à une épouse défunte (Pap. Leiden I, 371)," *ZÄS* 99, (1973): 94-103.

The passage in *Eloquent Peasant* gains an aspect that is not necessarily obvious at first glance unless the aforementioned references are kept in mind: a peasant who had a wife whom he loved (Merit) and a family which he unselfishly provided for. His wife is characterized as a “loved one” implying her nature as ideal and simultaneously expressing an attitude towards that nature. This literary tool is found in Middle, Late Egyptian and Demotic narratives where women serve as ideal models, even though their roles are minor in the stories. As representatives of ideal models of their gender, they are assigned names reflecting the social attitude towards such women. Merit’s character may accordingly be paralleled with Rudjedet’s (*Rwd-dd.t*) in the fourth tale of *Cheops Court*. Rudjedet is the mother of the three newborn kings who will found the new dynasty and the only female character who is given a name in the entire composition. Her name, meaning “strong of durability,”⁵⁸⁶ reflects her attributes implicitly conveyed to the audience: she survived giving birth to the three new-coming kings⁵⁸⁷ even though she took sick and had difficulty during childbirth (*ksn mss=s*, 9, 21-22); that quality in itself was bestowed upon her by the gods who facilitate her birth,⁵⁸⁸ by virtue of her good nature which is depicted through her husband’s care for her as he stands outside the house, with his apron upside down,⁵⁸⁹ worried that any harm should happen to her while she is in labor. Another example is Henoutnefret “Beautiful Mistress” in *Merira and King Sasobek* (discussed below), whom the king wrongfully snatches from Merira, her husband. Conversely, flawed women are often nameless in the stories. Examples include the unfaithful wives in *Cheops Court*, and *Two Brothers* (discussed in detail below). These women commit abominable acts for which they suffer severe punishments and destruction. Their namelessness, thus, reflects a literary tool that presents the audience with general examples of women of their kind, i.e. they are generalizations: “any woman” who commits adultery.

Thus far, a narrative portrayal of the ideal Egyptian wife in Middle and New Kingdom sources (literary and non-literary) has been shown within a cultural norm that fostered a reciprocal relationship between a husband and wife centering in the notion of “love/desire” (*mr*). Here *mr* involves providing the wife

⁵⁸⁶ H. Jenni, "Der Papyrus Westcar," *SÄK* 25, (1998): 127.

⁵⁸⁷ The three children themselves do not play any active part in the story beyond the birth scene and no interaction between mother and sons is ever mentioned. This is expected: the essence of the entire composition is the prophecy of the birth of the kings, with the other wonders in the tale leading up to it, cf. Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 13.

⁵⁸⁸ The theogamy motif in this story is reminiscent of the Deir el Bahari reliefs relating the divine conception of Hatshepsut: Ruddjedet is said to be the one who will give birth to “three children of Re, Lord of Sakhbu”, cf. Teyssie, "The Portrayal of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Tale", 58, n. 165.

⁵⁸⁹ E. Staehelin, "Bindung und Entbindung," *ZÄS*, (1970). 125-39 discusses this passage at length and suggests that the husband’s apron is untied as a sympathetic parallel to the wife’s untied garments during childbirth. It is also possible that the husband is simply confused and anxious for his wife’s and the children’s safety and therefore wore his apron upside down in his confusion.

with everything good and the ideal wife, in return, becomes a profitable field for her husband, bearing children and sustaining the household. The ideal wife is mainly portrayed through literary characterization: a name that reflects her ideal nature and the social attitude towards such nature.

The reciprocal nature of *mr* in marriage conforms to reciprocity among officials and may be defined as a universal social expectation where the subordinate party behaves in accordance with his/her duty, while the superior party reciprocates through love (*mr*) providing sustenance and economical support. This is expressed in Ptahhotep's teaching where a superior who loves his dutiful subordinates will clothe their back and sustain them (maxim 27).

(5.4) Marriage and the 9th Century BC: The "marriage contracts"

From the 9th century BC, marriage becomes institutionalized and recorded on formal documents, the so-called "marriage contracts." In his exhaustive study⁵⁹⁰ on the subject of marriage, Pestman provided examples from the New Kingdom to the Hellenistic period consisting of documentary as well as literary sources. However, as noted by Loprieno, "scholars and modern readers often tend to treat Egyptian culture as though it were static, with no appreciable changes throughout the three thousand years of Pharaonic history."⁵⁹¹ Accordingly, from this perspective, I find that the first two texts from the New Kingdom in Pestman's study are not suitable as examples of common marriage practice. Rather, I consider the texts as *do ut des* agreements where slaves gain freedom through marriages with free citizens.⁵⁹² The first text records the manumission of a slave who belonged to a Royal Hairdresser, Sabastet.⁵⁹³ Here Sabastet gives his niece to the slave as wife: "I (i.e., Sabastet) gave him (i.e., the slave) for wife (*rdi r ḥm.t*, l. 14) Ta-Kemnet ("the blind one"), daughter of my sister Nebetta, who had previously lived with my wife and my sister. He (i.e. the slave) now leaves the house, being deprived of nothing [...] and if he decides to agree to a legal compromise with my sister, no one will ever do anything against him."⁵⁹⁴ The second New Kingdom text is the so-called Adoption Papyrus from the 20th dynasty⁵⁹⁵ where a widow bequeaths her fortune to her adopted children. Three of these children were born of a female slave whom the widow had bought with her husband when he was alive. The fourth adopted child was the widow's own brother who married one of the female slaves ("made as wife" *ir m ḥm.t*) with the acceptance of the widow (*iw=i šsp=f n=s, rto. 2, 20-23*). The widow further

⁵⁹⁰ Pestman, *Marriage and Matrimonial Property in Ancient Egypt. A Contribution to Establishing the Legal Position of the Woman*.

⁵⁹¹ Antonio Loprieno, "Slaves," In *The Egyptians*, 186.

⁵⁹² As noted by Loprieno: see detailed discussion in Antonio Loprieno, "Slaves," In *The Egyptians*, 185-219, particularly 204-7, which discuss the two slave cases.

⁵⁹³ Louvre E 11673 = Urk. IV, 1369, 4-16 (18th dynasty):

⁵⁹⁴ This translation in: Loprieno, "Slaves," In *The Egyptians*, 206.

⁵⁹⁵ A. H. Gardiner, "Adoption Extraordinary," *JEA* 26, (1940): 23-9.

states: “Now, I have freed her, and if she gives birth to a son or daughter, they too will be free citizens in the land of the Pharaoh (...).”⁵⁹⁶ As noted previously, recorded agreements can reflect certain conducts that deviate from customary behavior in society. The emphasis in these texts on the “free” status of the spouses reflects the primary function of the agreements: slaves are being set free *through* marriage. Sabastet’s niece, as her name suggests, was blind and her marriage to the slave left Sabastet with two females under his responsibility rather than three. The widow in the Adoption Papyrus was apparently left with the responsibility of her household after her husband’s death. The slave girl would leave the house with her husband and thus become economically independent of the widow.

The earliest *recorded* example of marriage practice dates to the Third Intermediate Period⁵⁹⁷ and is attested from this period onwards. The marriage was recorded on the so-called “marriage contracts”⁵⁹⁸ which generally convey that property in the union was divided into the property of the wife, the property of the husband, and the joint property acquired during the marriage. The husband could provide a gift to the woman, promising her an annual maintenance, or he could pledge his entire property, present and future, as security for providing her with food and clothing throughout the marriage: here he acquired the right to use and dispose of her property, but he must be able to provide her with the equivalent of the property she brought into the marriage. In the first type of agreement, the “gift of a woman” (*šp n šhm.t*)⁵⁹⁹ was recorded on the “woman’s document” (*sh n šhm.t*), and a “document of responsibility to(wards) a wife” was drawn up (Lüddeckens’ “Ehefrauenobligation,” *‘.wy n hm.t*). In the second type of arrangement, a “document concerning money” (*sh db3 hd*) was drawn up in which the woman’s gift (i.e. her property as a gift) to the husband was recorded, and an “annuity contract”⁶⁰⁰ (*sh n s‘nh*) was drawn up, recording the annuity guaranteed by the husband. All these documents follow certain formulaic expressions reminiscent of prenuptial agreements, establishing for the wife the line of inheritance from the property of the husband to any children produced by the union. In general, these marriage contracts are less concerned with legitimatizing the marriages or the children born of the union. Rather, the contracts listed the couple’s economic responsibilities to each other and their future children at the beginning of and during the marriage, and in the event of the marriage ending either by divorce, death, or adultery. The different categories of documents do not all

⁵⁹⁶ This translation in: Loprieno, “Slaves,” In *The Egyptians*, 207.

⁵⁹⁷ S. Allam, “Les obligations et la famille dans la société égyptienne ancienne,” *OA* 16, (1977): 96; E. Lüddeckens, *Ägyptische Eheverträge*, 10-15.

⁵⁹⁸ The overview here provided is based on the study of: J. G. Manning, “Demotic Law,” In *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law. Volume 2*, 819-61, especially 835-43. References are provided when needed for specific or problematic terminologies.

⁵⁹⁹ On marital gifts cf. J. G. Manning, “Demotic Law,” In *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law. Volume 2*, 842-43.

⁶⁰⁰ For the term cf. Johnson, “Annuity Contracts’ and Marriage,” In *For his Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer*, 113-31. I follow Johnson’s translation, but there are several interpretations of the term; e.g., “endowment:” cf. C. F. Nims, “Notes on University of Michigan Demotic Papyri from Philadelphia,” *JEA* 24, (1938): 74-7.

occur in one single contract, which probably reflects local traditions as well as changes over time in the practice of marriage agreements.⁶⁰¹

A marriage contract from the 9th century BC (22nd/23rd Dynasties) is pBerlin 3048 (verso: text A)⁶⁰² was negotiated between the bride's father and the groom. The formula reads: "Entering (*ḥ*) into the house of PN (father in law), which PN (the groom) made in order to make his document: 'responsibility to(wards) a wife', for the lady PN, his daughter, as wife today."⁶⁰³ An example of a contract made solely between bride and groom is pCairo 30907/9⁶⁰⁴ from around the 7th century BC: "On this day the entering into the house of PN by PN." The groom lists his property, which he gives to his bride as a "gift of a woman" and then swears an oath, affirming that if he leaves his wife and loves (*mr*) another woman, unless the cause of his leaving is adultery committed by his wife ("the great crime"), he will give to her the above-mentioned property. The preserved text concludes with remarks (broken) concerning the children that his wife will bear him.

(5.4.1) A Wedding

There is no official document that records a religious ceremony at the consummation of a marriage (on a non-royal level). However, one unpublished narrative text from around the 2nd century AD exceptionally preserves a "wedding" scene of a certain Hareus and Tatinebethet (pCarlsberg 422).⁶⁰⁵ The scene is not entirely complete but some lines are preserved that portray the "celebration of taking a wife" (*ḥb n t3y ḥm.t*): "They did not ... [...] in the gardens before they had sent their flowers of the garden [in order to let (?)] preparations to be made. When the time came, they purified themselves

⁶⁰¹ Manning, "Demotic Law," In *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law. Volume 2*, 842.

⁶⁰² The papyrus forms part of the "Tekalothis papyri:" an archive from Karnak. Not much can be said about the archive until the papyri and their contents have been systematically studied, which would shed light on the historical context of the contract as well as information on archiving and private libraries. pBerlin 3048 measures 25.5 x 355cm and is believed to have been part the archive of one generation of Theban priests whose name was *dd-Mnt-iw=f-ḥnkḥ*. While the Recto contains the hymn to Ptah, the verso contains 37 cursive late hieratic texts ranging from short to long lists, drafts or excerpts of legal texts, and drawings. Only two texts on the verso have been published: the marriage contract (text A) and personal notes (text B). Text A: Lüddeckens, *Ägyptische Eheverträge*, 10-11; 184. Text B: K. Donker van Heell, "The Scribbling-pad of Djemontefankh Son of Aafenmut, Priest of Amonrasonthet and Overseer of the King's Treasury (P. Berlin 3048 verso)," In *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen 23-27 August 1999*, 139-48.

⁶⁰³ Pestman, *Marriage and Matrimonial Property in Ancient Egypt. A Contribution to Establishing the Legal Position of the Woman*, 12; Lüddeckens, *Ägyptische Eheverträge*, 8.

⁶⁰⁴ Lüddeckens, *Ägyptische Eheverträge*, 12-13.

⁶⁰⁵ For preliminary remarks cf. Ryholt, "An Elusive Narrative Belonging to the Cycle of Stories about the Priesthood of Heliopolis," In *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen, 23-27 August 1999*, 361-6. For Hareus see (2.5.5)

(w3b) for the feat (*hlwt*). They drank; they ate, and [they] became drunk.⁶⁰⁶ We also learn that “elder siblings” or “brothers” (of either bride or groom?) were present (x+2, 22), and that another feast took place, which involved the bride and her “companion:” “the feast of the [...] who is companion [of] Tatinebethebet” (*n3 hb.w n t3 [...] i.ir iry[.t n] t3y-di.t-Nb.t-hb.t 2, 21-22*).⁶⁰⁷ The passages thus suggest that celebrations, if and when they occurred, were a secular rather than a formal or religious event. It also appears that certain customs were associated with the marriage celebration such as the feast involving the bride and her companion. Other than this passage, not much can be said about marriage celebrations in ancient Egypt in general. The text is of Roman date, and before more material emerges, it is not possible to determine whether such practices occurred in earlier time periods or whether they are influenced by other cultures.

(5.4.2) Divorce

Divorce in the sources from the 9th century BC onwards convey that either party could dissolve the marriage by a declaration or by leaving the house,⁶⁰⁸ and the terms used here are “leaving” (*h3ʕ*) or mostly employed by the wife “departing” (*šm*) the husband’s house. There are very few divorce documents,⁶⁰⁹ but the concept is referred to in the formula found in the various marriage contracts: “If I leave (*h3ʕ*) you as wife, be it that I hate (*msʔ*) you, be it that I love/desire (*mr*) another woman as wife instead of you, I shall give you...”⁶¹⁰ This formula becomes relatively standardized in documents from later periods. If the wife was adulterous, she leaves the husband’s home without any economic benefits. The adultery is referred to as the “great crime found in women” and will be discussed in detail below.

⁶⁰⁶ Translation in: Ryholt, “An Elusive Narrative Belonging to the Cycle of Stories about the Priesthood of Heliopolis,” In *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen, 23-27 August 1999*, 365.

⁶⁰⁷ Ryholt, “An Elusive Narrative Belonging to the Cycle of Stories about the Priesthood of Heliopolis,” In *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen, 23-27 August 1999*, 364.

⁶⁰⁸ On the dissolution of the marriage, cf. Pestman, *Marriage and Matrimonial Property in Ancient Egypt. A Contribution to Establishing the Legal Position of the Woman*, 58-79.

⁶⁰⁹ Manning, “Demotic Law,” In *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law. Volume 2*, 837. For example 12 deeds are from the Thebaid, Thebes and Aswan, involving a limited number of families; cf. Pestman, *Marriage and Matrimonial Property in Ancient Egypt. A Contribution to Establishing the Legal Position of the Woman*, 71-9. One document from the Saite period and one from the Persian period are discussed in E. Cruz-Uribe, “Slavery in Egypt During the Saite and Persian Periods,” *RIDA* 29, (1982): 47-71. One document with an oath confirming the division of property is discussed in S. P. Vleeming, “A Demotic Doppelurkunde,” In *The Two Faces of Graeco-Roman Egypt. Greek and Demotic and Greek-Demotic Texts and Studies Presented to P. W. Pestman* 155-70.

⁶¹⁰ This example is from the 3rd century pHauswald 14, see Lüddeckens, *Ägyptische Eheverträge*, 54. The same text in Pestman, *Marriage and Matrimonial Property in Ancient Egypt. A Contribution to Establishing the Legal Position of the Woman*, 59.

(5.5) Two Motifs in the Context of Marriage Contracts

The terminology in marriage contracts are significant sources to take into consideration when motifs of marriage in Demotic narratives are concerned. For instance, in the story of *Merira and King Sasobek* (manuscript: 7th century BC),⁶¹¹ Merira had agreed to die instead of the king in order to plead for a prolongation of the latter's life in the underworld. Before this happens, Merira makes Sasobek swear an oath concerning his wife:

I (i.e. Sasobek) will not let Henutneferet, your wife, [abandon] your house. If a nobleman (even) looks at her, I will reproach him (just) as I would, was it my own wife. I will not let her suffer in my time. I will not let a nobleman come to your house and I myself will not look at her (either), pharaoh will not look at her beauty

(*Merira and Sasobek*, 2, 6-9)

*bn iw=y di.t [h3]ʕ hn.wt-Nfr.t t3y=k hm.t r-bnr n p3y=k pr i.ir nw sr i.r=s iw=y (r) tttt sw [r-ht p3] nty
iw=y ir=f n t3y=y hm.t-nsw.t [hr bn iw=y r di.t 3]ty.w sw n p3y=y h3 hr bn iw=y (r) [di.t iw] sr r p3y=k
pr bn iw=y (r) nw r.r=s hʕ bn ir Pr-ʕ3 (...) (r) nw r p3[y=s ʕn].w*

I find it likely that this passage refers to Henutneferet's "divorce" from Merira as a consequence of his death. In reconstructing the passage, Posener noted that there is no space after *bn iw=y di.t [...]* in the initial phrase to reconstruct *šm*, *iw*, or *pr*,⁶¹² yet he translated "Je ne permettrai pas que Hénoutnefret, ta femme, [sorte] hors de ta maison," while Hoffmann and Quack⁶¹³ read "Ich werde Henut-Neferet, deine Frau, nicht aus deinem Haus fortschicken." I find that the traces⁶¹⁴ just after the lacuna perfectly fit reconstructing the verb *h3ʕ* as in *bn iw=y di.t [h3ʕ] PN r-bnr n p3y=k pr*. Here *h3ʕ r-bnr* corresponds to Coptic **ⲕⲱ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ** (*Copt. Dict.*, 97a) "abandon" with *n*, **ⲛ**- introducing the object of the verb: *pr* "house." Henutneferet is the subject of the prospective *h3ʕ* after *di*, and accordingly the line reads "I will not let Henutneferet, *your* wife, [abandon] *your* house."

As noted above, the verb *h3ʕ* can be used when the wife leaves her husband: Pestman quotes three examples,⁶¹⁵ and the use of this particular verb in the passage is presumably not coincidental and

⁶¹¹ See §(2.4.3) for Merira and (3.4) for Sasobek.

⁶¹² Posener, *Le Papyrus Vandier*, 51 note c.

⁶¹³ Hoffmann and Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur. Münster*, 155.

⁶¹⁴ Posener, *Le Papyrus Vandier*, 51, pl. 2.

⁶¹⁵ *iw=y h3ʕ=k n hy*, cf. Pestman, *Marriage and Matrimonial Property in Ancient Egypt. A Contribution to Establishing the Legal Position of the Woman*, 60 n. 6 and 67.

would have been recognizable for the audience. Merira's primary concern would not have been that his wife would walk out from the house or be thrown out of it, rather that she should "leave" it *as* his wife: officially, she would have been unbound to Merira when he had died and therefore eligible to remarry, but from an emotional perspective Merira still considered her to be his wife. This makes perfect sense considering that the king immediately refers to the possibility of her meeting another man in which case he will "reproach" the man just as he would do if anyone approached his own "wife," i.e. Henutneferet's status will remain a married woman who should not be approached. Unfortunately, the king does not keep his oath to Merira: he makes Henoutneferet his own royal wife, takes over Merira's property, and kills his son (4, 16-17) all of which is recognizable to the audience as a breach in appropriate conduct where the innocent Henoutneferet was subject to the evil machinations of the king.

A parallel motif that may be interpreted in the context of marriage contracts is in *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah*. Here Khamwase had seen the beautiful Tabubu and offered her 10 deben of silver (5, 7) in return for having sex with him. Offended by the offer, Tabubu claims that she is a priestess (*w^cb.t*), not a lowly person (*rm.t hm*) who would sleep with a man in such manner (5, 9). She then seduces Khamwase into making an "annuity contract" (*sh n s^cnh*) for her, along with a "document concerning money" (*db3 hd*) on all his belongings after which she promises that she will let him do what he desires with her (*p3 nty mr=k*). Subsequently, Khamwase agrees to these terms (*tw=f ir=w n=s w^c sh n s^cnh w^c db3 hd r nty nb nkt nty mtw=f*; 5, 19-20).

Edgerton had noted that the entire procedure in the episode might well have been as "illegal" as it was "immoral," but rejects the idea that it refers to any marriage procedures.⁶¹⁶ However, if the documents mentioned in the episode are interpreted at face value, the "document concerning money" (*sh db3 hd*) would record the woman's gift to the husband, and the husband in exchange would pledge an annual maintenance to the woman on an "annuity contract" (*sh n s^cnh*). Accordingly, I interpret that Tabubu was suggesting that her sexual favors would represent her "gift" to Khamwase and the "document concerning money" would figuratively represent that gift in return for which Khamwase should see to her annual maintenance. The audience would probably have recognized that Khamwase was about to compose the same contracts used in marriage agreements without dissolving his former marriage. Tabubu further makes Khamwase first have his children subscribe the document, so that they would not contest (*mlh*) with her children for his property (*nkt.w*) (5, 24), but later decides that it is easier, for the same reason, simply to have his children killed (5, 26). Edgerton notes that this "probably had no real purpose but to hurt" Khamwase, especially since the children had already signed

⁶¹⁶ W. F. Edgerton, *Notes on Egyptian Marriage: Chiefly in the Ptolemaic Period*, 3, ff.

the document,⁶¹⁷ but it is more likely that Tabubu, as king Sasobek, was completely removing any chances for the children to plea their cases as heirs of their fathers. In the end, however, the entire scene was the fabrication of the magician Naneferkaptah as a lesson to Khamwase. When considering the socio-cultural value of the sons (and daughters) as heirs of their parents, as well as the constitutional marriage contracts, the experiences of both Merira and Khamwase would have been considered socially scandalous.

(5.6) Petese Stories: The “Vices” and “Virtues” of Women

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, characterization was a means of ascribing the wife attributes that conformed to her ideal image. An additional observation, in comparison with Middle and Late Egyptian narratives, is that stories from the Ptolemaic period onwards are more descriptive of the relationship between husband and wife. But prior to elaborating on this literary aspect, an introduction to *Petese Stories* is in order.⁶¹⁸ The earliest extant passage of this narrative dates to the 4th century BC from Saqqara;⁶¹⁹ the latest and more complete version is from the temple of Tebtunis and dates to the 2nd century AD. *Petese Stories* consists of a composition that presents its audience with 70 stories of two main aspects of women’s character: their virtues (*mnḥ*), i.e. the quality of living up to a purpose, and their vices (*wyhy*), i.e. antonym of *mnḥ* and thus failure to live up to a purpose.⁶²⁰ The stories are divided into 35 short stories for each aspect of women. Each story has a title in the composition as belonging either to the “stories of scorn (*hsf*) of women” or “stories of praise (*hs*) of women.” The manuscript is thus the only Egyptian fictional narrative that actually contains direct reference to its purpose: examples of good and bad women.

Intertextually, references to stories of “scorn (*hsf*) of women” are found in other Demotic literary texts, suggesting that the genre formed a significant part of Egyptian literary tradition. Examples include *Insinger* wisdom text (1st Century BC, Akhmim),⁶²¹ *The Harpist’s Song* (Roman period),⁶²² and a different version of *Insinger*, pCarlsberg 2 (2nd century AD, Tebtunis).⁶²³ *The Harpist’s Song* relates how

⁶¹⁷ W. F. Edgerton, *Notes on Egyptian Marriage: Chiefly in the Ptolemaic Period*, 3.

⁶¹⁸ Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II (P. Petese II)*; Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 4: The Story of Petese son of Petetum and Seventy other Good and Bad Stories (P. Petese)*.

⁶¹⁹ pDem Saq. 4: Smith and Tait, *Saqqâra Demotic Papyri I (P. Dem. Saq. I)*, 149-53.

⁶²⁰ Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II (P. Petese II)*, 6ff.

⁶²¹ Lexa, *Papyrus Insinger. Les enseignements moraux d’un scribe égyptien du premier siècle après J.-C. Texte démotique avec transcription, traduction française, commentaire, vocabulaire et introduction grammaticale et littéraire..*

⁶²² Thissen, *Der verkommene Harfenspieler. Eine altägyptische Invektive (P. Wien KM 3877)*..

⁶²³ Discussed of intertextuality: H-J. Thissen, "Tadel der Frauen," *Enchoria* 14, (1986): 159-60; Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II (P. Petese II)*, 11-13. pCarlsberg 2: A. Volten, *Kopenhagener Texte zum Demotischen Weisheitsbuch (Pap. Carlsberg II, III verso, IV verso und V)*, 49.

the harpist, once drunk, sings anew about “the scorn of the women” (*dd n n3 hsf.w n n3 shm.tw*: 4, 9). The latter two versions of *Insinger* significantly recall the stories about the vices of women by their actual title: “There is she whom I know from ‘the scorn of evil women’” (*wn t3 nty-iw-iw=y rh st hr p3 hsf n shm.t bn*: *Insinger*: 8,10) and “there are those who are in the writings among ‘the scorn of women’” (*wn n3 nty hn n3 sh.w hn n3 hsf.w n s[hm.t* pCarlsberg 2: 4, 10). The Carlsberg text is exceptional in explicitly referring to the genre as recorded in “writing” because it shares its provenance with the 2nd century version of *Petese Stories* (Tebtunis temple library), accordingly suggesting that the author was at least acquainted with *Petese Stories*.⁶²⁴ All together, the picture produced by these intertextual references is that stories about the “scorn of women” were circulating as early as the Ptolemaic period.

The intertextuality between *Insinger* and *Harpist* had already been noted by Volten.⁶²⁵ Subsequently, Lichtheim suggested that the phrase “scorn of women” reflected a literary treatment of the theme of good and bad in groups of aphorisms, rather than a book.⁶²⁶ Accordingly, she suggested that the treatment of the subject in, for example, the Demotic *Teaching of Ankhsheshonq* was inspired from the Hellenistic gnomologia and florilegia⁶²⁷ (anthologies of poetic sayings from different sources). Thissen confirmed the connection by identifying the phrase ψόγος γυναικῶν “blame of women” as the title for an excerpt of Euripides’ *Hippolytos* (664-8) in a 2nd century BC gnomology of sayings that interchangeably denounced and defended women and marriage.⁶²⁸ He further noted the phrase used as the title for chapter 72 of the florilegium of Johannes Stobaios (5th century AD) thus placing the Egyptian and Greek phrase in a contemporary context understanding the former as a transfer of latter to Egyptian literary tradition.⁶²⁹ Sayings about the “scorn of women” were accordingly circulating in Egyptian and Greek around the same time. It is possible, within the same context, to parallel the Egyptian *mnh* with Greek ἀρετήηγ, which characterizes goodness or excellence. In Greek, the description is also used of women in Homer’s *Odyssey* (2: 206) and Plutarch (1st century AD) on the Bravery of Women.⁶³⁰ Here, Plutarch talks “of the virtues of women” ἀρετῆς γυναικῶν presenting 28 specific historical instances of women founding cities, defeating enemies in battle, establishing justice and restoring domestic tranquility: but his presentation is of an *historical* nature rather than a

⁶²⁴ Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II* (P. Petese II), 12.

⁶²⁵ He had recognized that pCarlsberg 2 was referring to a “book” mentioned in Harpist: Volten, *Kopenhagener Texte zum Demotischen Weisheitsbuch* (Pap. Carlsberg II, III verso, IV verso und V), 49.

⁶²⁶ M. Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context: A Study of Demotic Instructions*, 161.

⁶²⁷ M. Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context: A Study of Demotic Instructions*, 48-50; 161-2.

⁶²⁸ Thissen, “Tadel der Frauen,” 159-60.

⁶²⁹ Another example of terminology transference is the Greek “Amazon,” which becomes the Egyptian “Land of the women”. cf. discussion on §(4.4.2).

⁶³⁰ LCL: 3, 471-581

poetical. Aside from these references, there are not, to my knowledge, references to “virtues of women” in Egyptian or Greek as titles for anthologies. This is perhaps because the immoral or problematic nature of the human being is that which gains most attention. Be that as it may, representations of good and bad women have a long Egyptian literary tradition, but the antithetical treatment of the theme is distinct and has no apparent precursor in Egyptian tradition.⁶³¹ This circumstance and the connection made by Thissen strongly suggest that the anthological frame of treating the subject in *Petese Stories* was a Greek literary tool adapted in Egyptian literary tradition.

Unfortunately, most of the narratives in *Petese Stories* are fragmentary making it hard to form a complete picture of the narratives, but some “virtuous” wives may be identified. Most of these women suffer immensely from the evil machinations of men: husbands, superiors, priests, etc. This reveals an implicit acknowledgement in the narrative that the male gender was faulty and imperfect as well: a wife and mother is raped (*t3y n kns*, lit. taken by force) and killed by a villain,⁶³² another is abducted and raped by a priest,⁶³³ and a third is buried alive by her husband so that he can marry another woman.⁶³⁴ (Scornful women are discussed in the following section).

In Demotic fiction, the audience sees the good wife from a psychological point of view and is met with intimate portrayals of the physical relation between husband and wife. The psychological aspect includes her emotions for her husband; concern, frustrations, empathy and so on, while the physical aspects reveals her sexual nature as pleasing and beautiful. These are unprecedented portrayals of good wives, which I interpret within the frame of reference of virtuous and scornful women, i.e. characters that exemplify *mnḥ* (living up to social expectation) and characters that exemplify *wyḥy* (failing to live up to social expectation). Most Demotic narratives that include motifs of bad wives are in the *Petese Stories* and are very fragmentary. Accordingly, a more detailed picture of the literary motifs is difficult to accomplish. One example is *Blinding of Pharaoh*⁶³⁵ in *Petese Stories*, where the king fails to find a virtuous woman among his entire household whose tears can heal his blindness. All the women he had assembled are punished by death. I suspect that wives of scornful character are portrayed in a similar manner: nameless characters, who suffer greatly (mostly by death). This would conform to the literary tool observed in Middle and Late Egyptian narratives where adulterous wives are deprived of a name thus making them a general representation of their kind, i.e. all bad women.

⁶³¹ Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II (P. Petese II)*, 12.

⁶³² *The Prince and the Kalasiris*: Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II (P. Petese II)*, 47-58.

⁶³³ *The Rape of Hatmehit*: Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II (P. Petese II)*, 101-7.

⁶³⁴ *Buried Alive*: Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II (P. Petese II)*, 122-7.

⁶³⁵ Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II (P. Petese II)*, 31-46.

(5.6.1) The Virtuous wife

In the story-within-story of *Amasis and the Sailor* the audience is introduced to Hormaakheru, a sailor, whose wife's name was Shepmeret. The text relates that he called her Ankhet and that she called him Petese, and that "she loved him, and he loved her" (*iw=s mr n-im=f iw=f mr n-im=s ʿn*: 15). On a night when the sailor was nervous of sailing in bad weather, he could not lie down with his wife or touch her in order to have sex (*nk*) with her.⁶³⁶ His wife realizes the severity of his condition and prays: "O may he be cured from the fear of the river!" (16-21). Unfortunately no more of the motif is preserved since the story breaks off at this point, but a parallel motif is in *Khamwase and Siosiris*. Khamwase had returned to his house in a very distressed condition. His wife reached out and touched his body but found it cold, and she said to him: "My brother, Setna, there is no warmth in the breast. A change for the worse is in the flesh. Illness (*yʿb*) and grief (*th3*) are in the heart" and Khamwase then asks to be left alone with his thoughts (3, 8-9). Both of these motifs represent empathetic wives who are successful in recognizing their husbands' condition in a moment of distress and offer them comfort in the form praying for their wellness and attention to their physical condition.

Another parallel to the "love" between the sailor and his wife is in *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* where text relates that Naneferkaptah and Ihweret, his wife loved one another (*ir rmt mr p3y=f iry n-im=n*). The passage further describes that when Naneferkaptah slept (*sdr*) with Ihweret on their wedding night he found her very pleasing so he slept with her again and again (3, 6-7). This passage includes an explicit reference to "love" *mr* that encompasses its physical aspect in the relationship between husband and wife. This is unique in comparison to marital motifs of Middle and Late Egyptian narratives which are mainly silent concerning that aspect. Here, *mr* maintains its reciprocal aspect between the couple but includes an overt reference to its sexual nature. Accordingly, an important feature of the wives in these narratives is that they are loved and sexually desired.

Khamwase and Naneferkaptah is also exceptional in that Ihweret herself is the one who relates her story to Khamwase.⁶³⁷ She explains to him how she had accused the priest who had told her husband, Naneferkaptah, about the secret book of Thoth: "May Neith curse you, O priest! You have already related before him these [dreadful things. You have brought] me conflict; you have brought me strife"

⁶³⁶ Normally literary motifs employ the verb *sdr irm* "sleep with" when describing love scenes and the use of *nk* in this passage is unique.

⁶³⁷ S. Vinson, "Through a Woman's Eyes, and in a Woman's Voice: Ihweret as Focalizer in the First Tale of Setne Khaemwas," In *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World*, 303-51. Vinson argues that the entire text acquires meaning through its resonance with the myth of Isis. He sees Ihweret's role in relation to the growing cultural importance of female characters (among which he includes mythical, literary and historical figures, such as Queen Arsinoe) modeled on the goddess Isis. Vinson's connection between Isis and Ihweret is unclear, especially because, as Vinson also notes on page 343, Naneferkaptah and Ihweret had fundamentally transgressed against the gods resulting in their destruction and Ihweret's "Isis-like attributes" has no influence in the story in any way.

(3, 22). She describes that she had done all that she could with Naneferkaptah to prevent him from going after the book. And she explicitly describes her physical and emotional state of mind when Naneferkaptah had gone in pursuit of the magic book: she waits for him by the sea of Coptos without drinking or eating, without doing anything at all except waiting for him to return, looking like a dead person (lit. “one who has reached the Good-house” (*pr-nfr* 3, 39). Here, the audience meets the concerned wife whose life metaphorically ceases when her husband departs from her.

These motifs of the virtuous wife characterize her as loving, devoted and faithful towards her husband who in return desires her physically and emotionally. This is the categorization of her nature as being *mnḥ* of which *Insinger* explains: “(As for a) Good woman of proven good character, you will not know (i.e. experience) her scorn on account of it” (*šḥm.t n3-nfr.t iw=s dnt irm t3y=s 3my.t nfr.t bn iw-n=k rh ḥsf.t=s (r-)db3.t=s*) (18, 22). Accordingly, such a woman who is good (*nfr*) and “virtuous” (*mnḥ*) does not possess the capability of being scornful: she is valued and praised in stories of “praise” (*ḥs*) of women.

Thus far, narrative portrayals of the ideal Egyptian wife in Middle and New Kingdom texts focused on the reciprocal nature of her relation with her husband. The portrayal centered on the notion of *mr*, “love,” but presented that concept from its practical aspect: husband provides for the wife with material goods and she was in turn the profitable field for her husband, who bore children and sustained the household. The good wife was mainly represented in characterization: her name reflected and showed the social attitude towards her ideal.

In the 9th century marriage become official practice. If marriage celebrations took place, they would occur within the private sphere. One narrative, the 2nd century AD pCarlsberg 422, preserves such a celebration: it describes the “celebration of taking a wife” where family attended and a feast that involved the bride and her companion took place, suggesting certain customs in connection with marriage celebrations. The marriage contracts proved to be useful sources for interpreting the scene of Merira’s concern that his marriage would be dissolved after his death and Tabubu’s attempt to lure Khamwase into a new marriage agreement while he was still married.

From the Ptolemaic period onwards motifs of the ideal wife are represented within a dichotomous categorization: the ideal wife is described within the category of the virtuous, good, and praised woman (*mnḥ*, *nfr*, *ḥs*) who stands in absolute contrast to the woman who possesses all the antonyms of that nature: vice, wickedness, and scorn (*wyhy*, *bn*, *ḥsf*). This latter category of women is the one who commits the “great crime found in women,” adultery. It is she on whom the next

paragraph focuses. But before discussing this in detail, remarks on adultery and social attitude will be presented.

(5.7) Adultery

(5.7.1) Deir el-Medina Sources

The most substantial documentary sources on adultery originate from Deir el Medina,⁶³⁸ home to the artisans who worked on the tombs in the Valley of the Kings during the 18th to 20th dynasties (New Kingdom). Here, complaints were recorded on ostraca and papyri that predominantly concern accusations against corrupt workmen. In many of these sources, men and women were accused of having had “sex” (*nk*) with others than their partners. For example, in pSalt 124⁶³⁹ the foreman of the community, Paneb,⁶⁴⁰ was accused of having had sex (*nk*) with a mother (Hul) and her daughter while his son also had sex with the daughter (2, 3-4). He was further accused of having had sex (*nk*) with a third woman, Tuy, “while she was wife” (*iw=s m hm.t*) of a workman named Qenna. In addition, the text recorded that the mother, Hul, was first “with” (*m-di*) a man named Penduau, and later she had sex (*nk*) with Paneb while she was “with” (*m-di*) Hesysunebef:

Memorandum about this: His son fled before him to the place of the gatekeepers and swore an oath, saying, 'I will not bear with him!' and he said, 'Paneb had sex with the citizeness Tuy, she being wife of the workman Qenna. He had sex with Hunur, she being with Penduau. He copulated with the citizeness Hul, she being with Hesysunebef', so said his son. And when he had sex with Hul he had sex with Webkhet, her daughter. And Aapehty, his son, had sex with with Webkhet as well.

(KRI IV, 410-11)⁶⁴¹

⁶³⁸ Many studies have been devoted to several aspects of this society, see for example: A. Dorn and T. Hofmann, eds., *Living and Writing in Deir el-Medine: Socio-historical Embodiment of Deir el-Medine Texts*; R. J. Demarée and J. J. Janssen, eds., *Gleanings from Deir el-Medina*; R. J. Demarée and A. Egberts, eds., *Deir el-Medina in the Third Millennium AD: A Tribute to Jac. J. Janssen*.

⁶³⁹ KRI IV, 408-14, 19th dynasty: S. Allam, *Hieratische Ostraka und Papyri aus der Ramessidenzeit*, 281-7; A. Théodoridès, "Dénonciation de malversations ou requête en destitution? (Papyrus Salt 124=Pap. Brit. Mus. 10055)," *RIDA* 28, (1981): 11-79.

⁶⁴⁰ Paneb is known from other sources (and was a married man): J. Černý, "Papyrus Salt 124 (Brit. Mus. 10055)," *JEA* 15, (1929): 253 ff; B. G. Davies, *Who's Who at Deir El-Medina. A Prosopographic Study of the Royal Workmen's Community*, 34-9.

⁶⁴¹ Following translation in Černý, "Papyrus Salt 124 (Brit. Mus. 10055)," 245.

These accusations were made by Amennakht. He was the son of a previous foreman, Nebnefer, who had also formerly accused Paneb of theft, bribery, violence, and disregard for his superiors. This altogether suggests that Amennakht thought that he himself had a better claim to his father's title as foreman, and hoped to gain it if Paneb was convicted.⁶⁴² As Eyre notes, this same motivation was probably behind the subsequent accusation of Paneb's son, Penanuqet, against a group of workmen led by a certain Userhat.⁶⁴³ Userhat was accused of having had sex with three women of other men (*nk=f 3 hm.t ȝy*): Menat, Taiuenes, Tawerethetpet, who respectively were with (*m-di*) Qenna, Nakhtamun, Pentaweret.⁶⁴⁴ Penanuqet's accusations were made to the local foreman and scribe, but his threat to take them to higher authority makes it a reasonable guess that his aim was to disgrace the administration that had succeeded his father's at Deir el-Medina.⁶⁴⁵ Amennakht and Penanuqet were thus both primarily motivated by their discontent because the office of foreman had slipped from their families.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the distinction in terminology forces the question whether there is a difference between being "with" someone and being the "wife" of someone."⁶⁴⁶ The expressions differ grammatically: one indicates possession while the other suggests a less formal characterization of the relationship. As for the verb *nk* "having sex," Janssen argued that the meaning of the verb had changed into "commit adultery" in the New Kingdom.⁶⁴⁷ I suggest interpreting the term from a perspective that takes literary motifs of adultery into consideration. Narrative motifs of adultery seldom use the term *nk* explicitly when adultery is concerned.⁶⁴⁸ Rather, they present the audience with scenarios of adultery where the lovers "pass time" or "spend an hour" together in seductive circumstances; e.g. in a pavilion drinking wine etc. The notions of passing time or spending an hour together indicate the *fleeting* aspect of adultery. This stands in contrast to "loving" (*mr*) a wife, which encompasses a *durable* reciprocity that begins with the establishment of the household (*grg pr*). I accordingly interpret *nk* as a vulgar expression of having sex without commitment for the sake of momentary carnal pleasure. This may be observed throughout the entire historical period in narrative portrayals of adultery, which are described below.

⁶⁴² Eyre, "Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt," 94.

⁶⁴³ oDM 148, rt. 10-vs. 6 = RAD 57, 6-58.

⁶⁴⁴ RAD 57, 14-16

⁶⁴⁵ Eyre, "Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt," 94.

⁶⁴⁶ As Eyre notes there need not be a legal distinction between the variations. Possibly a woman of higher status "wife", had more legal demands in terms of financial safeguard as opposed to "cohabitation" which could exist without financial commitments. cf. Eyre, "Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt," 94, n. 17.

⁶⁴⁷ J. J. Janssen, "Two Egyptian Commandments," In *Funerary Symbols and Religion: Essays Dedicated to Professor M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss on the Occasion of his Retirement from the Chair of the History of Ancient Religions at the University of Amsterdam*, 52-59.

⁶⁴⁸ This is discussed in detail on p. xxx

(5.7.2) The Seduction

Adultery in narrative fiction is never a motif that is presented in medias res. On the contrary, it seems of some significance to the authors to describe the relation from the very beginning, and all the scenarios are instigated by the gift-giving motif. The gesture seems to correspond to an implicit expectation that reciprocity in the form of sexual intercourse was expected from the recipient in return for the gift.⁶⁴⁹ An early example is the second story in *Cheops Court*. Here, Webationer's wife is attracted to a man and the text describes that she sends her maidservant to the man with "a chest filled with garments (*pds 1 mh m hbs.w*). Subsequently, the man returns to Webationer's wife, and the affair begins between the two (2, 1-2). Accordingly, sex was expected from the man in return for the present he had received from Webationer's wife.

The nature of the association between the adulterers, as opposed that between husband and wife, is solely to spend "an hour" together of carnal pleasure, without further social bonding. This characteristic of the relationship is more explicitly expressed in *Two Brothers*, where Bata's sister-in-law had invited Bata to have sex with her. By introducing Bata's physical appearance in the very beginning of the story: a perfect man (*h3wty nfr*) with no equal in the entire land, who had the god's strength (*phty*) in him (1, 4), the audience were prepared for the next scene. Here, the emphasis was on Bata's beauty and strong physique as the source that triggered the sexual desire of his sister-in-law: he walked out from the stable carrying a great quantity of wheat-sacks on his shoulders which immediately impressed Anubis' wife. She revealed this impression by asking him how much weight he was carrying (3, 6). Since she wished to "know him as a man" (*iw ib=st <r> rh=f m rh n'h3w.ty' 3,6*), whose great "strenght" (*phty*) she had been "observing daily" (3,6), she grabbed hold of him and presented him with an offer: "spend an hour (*wnw.t*) lying (*sdr*) together." This hour, she elaborated, would be "beneficial" for Bata (*3h n=k p3y*) because she will then make Bata "fine clothes" (*hbs.w nfr.w*).

By comparing the proposals of Webationer's and Anubis' wives, it may be concluded that gift-giving was a gesture made by the women to imply their desire to have a "service" in return. Within this context of social conduct reciprocity in the form "passing time" (*iri 3.t*), or "spending an hour" together was expected, not a durable partnership of establishing a household (*grg pr*) together.

⁶⁴⁹ For gift-giving in ancient Egypt as one of the distribution patters for goods and services in society see: J. J. Janssen, "Gift-Giving in Ancient Egypt as an Economic Feature," *JEA* 68, (1982): 253-8. The author, however, does not include literary motifs.

Two more stories refer to the motif of gift-giving within a sexual context: the Middle Egyptian *House of Life* (pBM EA 10475 *vs.* 15th-17th dynasties, possibly Thebes),⁶⁵⁰ and the Demotic *Khamwase and Nanferkaptah*. Both stories indicate that men applied the same procedure as well to gain sexual favors. In the latter story, Khamwase, a husband and a father, was so smitten by Tabubu's beauty that he desired her sexually. The parallelism is obvious: Khamwase was thus aroused by Tabubu's physical appearance in the same manner that Anubis' wife was attracted to Bata's physique. Khamwase sent his servant to Tabubu offering her 10 deben to "spend an hour" (*wꜥ.t wnw.t*) with him and Bata was offered "fine clothes" for "spending an hour" with his sister in law.

Only little remains of *House of Life* which takes place in a courtly setting. It involves a woman in charge of the "entire Royal apartments" (*ip.t nsw.t dr=s hr dr.t=s*: x+5.1-4). The woman had received exclusive gifts from a man: white linen, oil, honey, as a chest of black-eye paint, and vessels filled with myrrh (x +3.1-3). On its own, this passage does not necessarily refer to the gift-giving motif in return for sexual favors, but the following line resumes mentioning singers, singing and dancers, dancing [...]. This background could suggest an erotic scene. This is in view of *Cheops Court* and *Khamwase and Nanferkaptah* where the elements involved in the erotic scenes are of the same nature: alcoholic beverage, food, and from the story of the boating trip of king Sneferu, music may be added to the list as well. All these objects may be linked to carnal pleasure: Webationer's wife had the pavilion prepared with every good thing and the lovers spent the day in it drinking (*swr*) and being pleased (*hꜥp*). Tabubu had set the scene for seducing Khamwase by inviting him to a room decorated with precious stones that had many beds spread with sheer royal linen. Khamwase was handed a gold cup filled with wine, as his senses were stimulated by the smell of incense as the two spent a pleasant day together (5, 15-18). Within this frame of reference, it would not be surprising if *House of Life* was describing a similar scene of seduction.

Further motifs of adulterous women are found in the *Petese Stories* from the 2nd century AD. These are *Blinding of Pharaoh*⁶⁵¹ and *Adultery and the Royal Harem*.⁶⁵² Both texts are rather fragmentary, and any seduction scene which could have formed part of the stories is now lost. Nevertheless, in the former story, a blind king learned from a revelation that his blindness would be healed if he swiped his eyes with the tears of a virtuous woman (*shꜥm.t mnꜥh*). He sent for all 40 women of the royal household

⁶⁵⁰ R. B. Parkinson, "Two New 'Literary' Texts on a Second Intermediate Papyrus? A Preliminary Account of P. BM EA 10475," In *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten. Vorträge der Tagung zum Gedenken an Georges Posener 5.-10. September 1996 in Leipzig*, 190-3 and 196.

⁶⁵¹ Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II (P. Petese II)*, 31-46.

⁶⁵² Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 6: The Petese Stories II (P. Petese II)*, 108-10.

(*shm.t n pr-nsw*)⁶⁵³ but none of their tears had any healing effect. Their unfaithful nature was thus revealed to the king, who had them all killed. The second story is even more fragmentary than the former, but apparently a woman of the royal household was exposed as having slept (*sdr*) with someone.

All these women committed a “great crime” against their husbands and represented women of no moral who failed to perform their social role as virtuous (*mnh*) wives. They could be found in all layers of society including among the king’s own household. Thus the status of these women did not affect their behavior; it was their nature as scornful women (*shm.tw hsf*). Only the lover of Webanor’s wife had succumbed to the seductions of the adulterous wife, while Bata was entirely innocent. Accordingly, narrative tradition does not overtly portray men as adulterers before the Hellenistic period (*Khamwase* and *Petese Stories*), and when this is acknowledged, the audience is presented with different consequences for each gender. Before elaborating further on this subject, social attitudes on adultery will be presented in order to identify if such differentiated between men and women.

(5.7.3) Public Opinion

The earliest recorded public opinion against adultery in Ancient Egypt is a letter that concerns a married man, presumably called Nesamenemope, who had remained in an adulterous relationship with a woman (unnamed) for eight months.⁶⁵⁴ Apparently, people who were somehow related to Nesamenemope felt offended about his relationship with the woman and went to beat her up, along with her people. A steward restrained the attempt expressing his doubts about the accusations against the woman, and recommended that Nesamenemope should go to court with his own wife to take an oath. If he did not act accordingly, the steward warned, it would be at Nesamenemope’s own risk. If the lovers should meet again, the steward would not make a new attempt to keep the people back:

Quote: Your people were on the move; their old and their young, both men and women, in the evening. They had gone off saying: ‘We are going to beat her (r knkn st), together with her people.’

⁶⁵³ For “harem” cf. G. Callender, "The Nature of the Egyptian 'harim': Dynasties 1-20," *BACE* 5, (1994). This article looks at recent scholarship concerning the concept of "harim," which was thought to resemble the Ottoman "harim," but in reality had nothing in common with it besides referring to groups of women. The history of both institutions over twenty dynasties is traced, the terminology is discussed (including *ip.t nsw.t*), and the archaeological evidence for the "harim" in 1st to 17th Dynasties is presented. The author concludes that it is from the 20th Dynasty onwards that some resemblance with the Turkish "harim" can be postulated, on account of the evidence of the Harim Conspiracy against Ramses III.

⁶⁵⁴ pBM 10416 ro. 1-11 + vo. 1-13, presumably from Deir el Medina, 20th dynasty Janssen, "Marriage Problems and Public Reactions," In *Pyramid Studies and Other Essays. Presented to I. E. S. Edwards*, 137.

[It was?] the steward who said to them: 'Really, what (does it mean that) you are going [to the house?] of my scribe in order to beat my people? She is not there'. And he held them back and said to them: 'Is it your man who is to be found there? It was my messenger who said to me: 'He whom we will find [...] going (to) beat'. Tell it me, please. So he said to them.

And [they] answered him: 'Eight full months until today he is having sex with that woman (nk t3 hm.t) though he is not (the?) husband (m hy). If he were (the) husband, would he (then) not have sworn his oath concerning (vo.) your woman?' So they said to him.

And the steward sent to (my?) mother in the presence of Audjar, that workman [whom?] you consulted as well, saying: 'As regards Nesamenemope, why did you receive him to sleep with him repeatedly? (m nknk.t) [Do you?] seek for yourself partners to quarrel with them (tttt)? Would that not [...] in the evening to carry the things of the sweet fledgling (i.e. Nesamenemope), saying: 'We are going [... ...], as well'. So they said.

If the heart of that man is after you, let [him] enter the court (knb.t) together with his wife and let [him] swear an oath and return to your house. But if not, he may be as one who finds the way, and you shall put your mouth on his mouth. Really, if [I] held them back this time, I will not hold them back another (time). So he said. When my(?) (letter) reaches you, you shall not go to Neferti (?) with this matter.⁶⁵⁵

The problem in this incident appears to be that the affair had been going on for too long “Eight full months,” i.e. it was not a temporary affair: “an hour” or “passing time.” This would suggest that the man and woman involved in the affair took a liking to each other and therefore repeatedly kept seeing each other. The phrase “Eight full months until today he is having sex with that woman though he is not the husband” stresses the fact that the durable nature of their relation was the problem and that such a durable relation is confined to husband and wife. Accordingly, if the man’s truly desired his lover, he should have gone to court “together with his wife” and sworn an oath, either to obtain an official divorce or reach a settlement of some kind,⁶⁵⁶ and returned to be with his lover.

⁶⁵⁵ Present translation in Janssen, "Marriage Problems and Public Reactions," In *Pyramid Studies and Other Essays. Presented to I. E. S. Edwards*, 134-7, pls. 25-8. See also, Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 203.

⁶⁵⁶ Janssen, "Marriage Problems and Public Reactions," In *Pyramid Studies and Other Essays. Presented to I. E. S. Edwards*, 137.137.

The steward could have been referring to a process similar to that produced concerning inheritance around the same period (c. 1100 BC) in the vizier's court.⁶⁵⁷ Here, Amonkhau, a priest now living with his second wife, visited the court to establish the division of his property between his heirs. The priest had no children by his second wife, but there were children from the first marriage. His case thus concerned the joint property accrued in both marriages, which, technically, should go to his children. However, Amonkhau wished to divide this joint property: what had been accrued during the first marriage should go to his children, and what had been accrued during his second marriage should go to his second wife. This required the prior agreement of his children who duly appeared in court and gave their consent, even to the stipulation that none of them could contest the will in the future. The second wife therefore inherited what her husband wanted her to inherit. The steward could accordingly have been suggesting that Nesamenemope set the record straight: establishing who would be his legal heir(s). The passage where Nesamenemope's people intended to carry away his belongings from his lover's house may further substantiate that heirs, property, and ownership was an important issue in the episode.⁶⁵⁸ In this context, the significance of "documented" agreements is distinguished: they primarily appear in complicated situations.

Another example pertaining to public opinion is oDM 439,⁶⁵⁹ which records accusations made to a husband about the blatant infidelities of his wife. The accuser was a woman who seemed to have taken a particular dislike to the fact that a husband failed to notice his wife's adultery. In a similar spirit of public attitude, a person stated in oCairo 25527⁶⁶⁰ that a "wife (*hmt*) is (a) wife. She should not execute *mr* (*iri mr*), she should not copulate (*nk*)."⁶⁶⁰ The context of this complaint is lost but the attitude is clear: a wife should only be available to her husband in both aspects of the relation: *mr* (durable) as well as *nk* (sex): i.e. I understand *iri mr* as expressing the performance of the reciprocal nature of *mr* confined to the relationship between husband and wife.

As a whole, the cases discussed here suggest that families, friends, relatives and employers were all involved in each other's private affairs. Men and women in all kinds of associations accused each other of adultery. The accusations, however, do not seem to have resulted in convictions. On the other hand, people could take matters in their own hands in acts of violence against the culprits, while some found

⁶⁵⁷ pTurin 2021: J. Černý and T. E. Peet, "A Marriage Settlement of the Twentieth Dynasty: An Unpublished Document from Turin," *JEA* 13, no. 1 (1927): 30-9. For further references and translations, see: Allam, *Hieratische Ostraka und Papyri aus der Ramessidenzeit*, 320.

⁶⁵⁸ Janssen, "Marriage Problems and Public Reactions," In *Pyramid Studies and Other Essays. Presented to I. E. S. Edwards*, 137, see also p. 136 n. (r) for "fledgling".

⁶⁵⁹ J. F. Borghouts, "Monthu and Matrimonial Squabbles," *RdE* 33, (1981): 11-22.

⁶⁶⁰ Allam, *Hieratische Ostraka und Papyri aus der Ramessidenzeit*, 28.

it utterly unacceptable that men ignored their wives' adulterous behavior, making official complaints against them. In the 9th century BC, marriage contracts officially record adultery as the "great crime found in women," and any husband divorced his wife on account her infidelity was relieved of all his economic duties towards her.

(5.8) The "Great Crime Found in Women"

When marriage became institutionalized in the 9th century BC, divorce could be obtained on grounds of adultery, which was referred to as the "great crime found in a woman" (*btw ʿ3 nty gm=w n s.ḥm.t*).⁶⁶¹ Examples include the aforementioned marriage contracts of pBerlin 3048 and pCairo 30907/9 (9th and 7th centuries BC).⁶⁶² If the wife was divorced on grounds of adultery, she would lose her economic rights. Although not many documents record divorce proceedings,⁶⁶³ O'Brien's study on women in Demotic administrative texts found that the oaths sworn in the texts in general imply that women were more likely than men to be accused of wrong-doing and more vulnerable to rival claims by their property on divorce or bereavement.⁶⁶⁴ In cases where divorce was not effectuated on grounds of adultery, the Egyptian law ensured for the wife her dowry and also a penalty payment from the husband.⁶⁶⁵ What is of most interest in marriage contracts is their explicit reference to adultery as the "great crime found in women."

An early reference to the "great crime" (*btw*) was already recorded among the accusations against the conspirators against Ramses III (12th century BC).⁶⁶⁶ Here, some men, including two judges, had succumbed to the seduction of certain women involved in the plot and "caroused" with them, and committed "the crime" with them. These allegations appear to have been an additional relevant factor in the allegations against the conspirators stressing the immoral nature of their characters:

⁶⁶¹ This quote in pBerlin 3048, 18-19: Lüddeckens, *Ägyptische Eheverträge*, 11.

⁶⁶² cf. §(5.4)

⁶⁶³ cf. §(5.4.2)

⁶⁶⁴ However, the oaths also demonstrate that women did in fact have recourse to due legal process in defense of their claims and were capable of taking such action themselves. cf. A. A. O'Brien, "Women in Demotic Business and Administrative Texts from Ptolemaic and Roman Thebes" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1999), 189-92.

⁶⁶⁵ On divorce proceedings and sources, cf. Pestman, *Marriage and Matrimonial Property in Ancient Egypt. A Contribution to Establishing the Legal Position of the Woman*, 64ff.

⁶⁶⁶ Text: *KRI V*, 350-60: Among the important studies are: A. de Buck, "The Judicial Papyrus of Turin," *JEA* 23, (1937): 152-64; Y. Koenig, "À propos de la conspiration du harem," *BIFAO* 101, (2001): 293-314; Goedicke, "Was Magic Used in the Harem Conspiracy Against Ramses II? (P. Rollin and P. Lee)," 71-92; Y. Koenig, "Nouveaux textes Rifaud I," *CRIPEL* 10, (1988): 57-60; Koenig, "Nouveaux textes Rifaud II (document E)," 53-58.

Persons punished by cutting off their noses and their ears because they had forsaken the good instructions given to them; the women had gone; they had reached them at the place where they were; they had caroused (ir=w ʕ.t-ḥk.t) with them [...]. Their crime (btw) seized them.
(KRI V, 359-60, 6:1)⁶⁶⁷

Common in marriage contracts and the Ramses conspiracy document is the overt attitude that sexual misconduct was a criminal behavior and that women were responsible for it: in the former, the “crime” is (habitually) found in women and in the latter, women had initiated the seduction causing the great crime to take place. But the punishment, naturally, was a result of them trying to have the king killed.

The punishment for Ramses’ conspirator is in accord with the stipulations on the *Great Edict of Horemheb* (18th dynasty: 14th century BC)⁶⁶⁸ where mutilation was recorded as a legitimate penalty for magistrates who took advantage of their positions. These were to be punished by amputation of the nose and deportation (14-17).⁶⁶⁹ One interesting text, pDM 27⁶⁷⁰ records mutilation as punishment within a context of adultery. Here, a man had married a woman but, for some unknown reason, spent the night at his father’s house while she at hers. One day this man found his wife as she was having sex with a crewman, Merysakhmet.⁶⁷¹ He went to the magistrates in order to file a complaint, but they, surprisingly and for some unrecorded motive, had him beaten instead. One of the foremen, possibly one of the magistrates, objected to this misconduct. An oath was then administered to Merysakhmet that he would not again speak to the woman, on pain of mutilation of ears and nose and deportation to Nubia.⁶⁷² The oath did not keep Merysakhmet from approaching the woman again, and he winded up impregnating her. Then, Merysakhmet’s own father took him before the magistrates, and once more had him swear on pain of penal labor in Elephantine not to go to the woman. But in practice, hardly any source records such punishment for adultery, including pBM 27.

An additional source that echoed the stipulations in the abovementioned sources was recorded some thousand years later. Here Diodorus recorded in his accounts of Egypt:

⁶⁶⁷ Translation following: Buck, "The Judicial Papyrus of Turin," 156.

⁶⁶⁸ J-M. Kruchten, *Le décret d'Horemheb: Traduction, commentaire épigraphique, philologique et institutionnel*, §45-67; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest*, §45-67.

⁶⁶⁹ Following translation in: Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest*, §54.

⁶⁷⁰ KRI V 578-9 Allam, *Hieratische Ostraka und Papyri aus der Ramessidenzeit*, 301ff.

⁶⁷¹ Discussions of contents in H-W. Fischer-Elfert, "Der ehebrecherische Sohn (P. Deir el-Medineh 27, Stele UC 14.430 und P. Butler verso)," *GM* 112, (1989): 23-6. See also: W. Boochs, "Der ehebrecherische Sohn: Anmerkungen zum Aufsatz von Hans-W. Fischer in *GM* 112, 23ff," *GM* 114, (1990): 43-5.

⁶⁷² KRI V 57-9, 11ff.

if a man committed adultery with the woman's consent, the laws ordered that the man should receive a thousand blows with the rod, and that the woman should have her nose cut off, on the ground that a woman who tricks herself out with an eye to forbidden licence should be deprived of that which contributes most to a woman's comeliness.

*(Diodorus 1:78:4)*⁶⁷³

Mutilation of body-parts (lips, tongue, breast, hands, genitals, nose, and ears) is attested as judicial punishment in various cultures at different periods. The physical disfigurement would be recognizable in society as a mark of a judged criminal: a social stigma.⁶⁷⁴ The few sources on the subjected suggest that both men and women would (ideally) suffer mutilation for the crime of adultery- but we may note that hardly any human would survive 1000 blows of a rod.

With these references in mind, the following section discusses the consequences of adultery in the literary tradition.

(5.9) Consequences of the Great Crime

Dieleman finds that Demotic proverbs in wisdom literature do not give a direct description of women, but rather teach the reader how to behave with regards to them.⁶⁷⁵ Teyssiere argues that wisdom literature as a genre presents women in conventional social settings that mainly dwell on the negative aspect of the female psyche (the exception is the mother who was highly regarded): it warns against the dangerous aspect of feminine nature, emphasizing its "dark side" which would prevail if women were left to their own devices.⁶⁷⁶ In this context, she identifies that the function of narrative literature was providing concrete examples of fictitious situations in which the "stereotypes" (i.e. in wisdom texts) could be put to the test.⁶⁷⁷ Accordingly, she finds that adultery was the chief concern of wisdom literature when the subject was women and that this concern was woven into the framework of fictional tales providing the audience with effective illustrations of unsubstantiated but powerful allegations.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷³ LCL I.

⁶⁷⁴ See for example: G. Sperati, "Amputation of the Nose Throughout History," *Acta otorhinolaryngologica Italica* 29, no. 1 (2009).

⁶⁷⁵ Dieleman, "Fear of Women? Representations of Women in Demotic Wisdom Texts," 11.

⁶⁷⁶ Teyssiere, "The Portrayal of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Tale", 107.

⁶⁷⁷ Teyssiere, "The Portrayal of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Tale", 108.

⁶⁷⁸ Teyssiere, "The Portrayal of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Tale".

Teyssaire's and Dieleman's conclusions concur on one aspect, which is that wisdom literature includes adultery when the subject is women's dark side. However, Teyssaire identifies a general focus in wisdom texts on the "dark side" of women, while Dieleman finds that it is only *when* the subject of (Demotic) wisdom texts is marriage and sexuality that the particular concern tends to be adultery.⁶⁷⁹ The dichotomy here is that one is generalizing women as dangerous creatures, while the other only refers to that danger when marriage and union is involved. Teyssaire further posits that "If literature reflects the concerns of the society which produces it, one must believe that Egyptian culture was highly suspicious of its female members and marginalized them as a gender."⁶⁸⁰ She accordingly finds that literature presents an image of women, which is "extremely distorted" and in "complete opposition" to that of the *nbt pr* (Mistress of the House) and the social expectations attached to that role.⁶⁸¹

As mentioned, Dieleman noted that when the subject of Demotic wisdom texts is marriage and sexuality, the main concern is adultery. This appears also to be the case in wisdom texts of earlier date (not recognized by Teyssaire). But the extent to which adultery is focused upon (in Middle and Late Egyptian fiction as well) is rather minor in comparison with the size of the entire body of compositions. An early example is, Ptahhotep's 45 maxims, of which only one alludes to the adulterous wife; maxim 21st mentioned above:

*If you are well-to-do and establish your household, be gracious to your wife in accordance with what is fair. Feed her well, put clothes on her back; ointment is the balm for her body. Rejoice her heart all the days of your life, for she is a profitable field for her lord. Do not condemn her, but keep her far away from power; control her, for her eye is quick and sharp. Watch her, for thus you will cause her to remain long in your house. If you are too strict with her, there will be tears. She offers sexual favors in return for her upkeep, and what she asks is that her desire be fulfilled.*⁶⁸²

Here the audience is advised that the wife, when treated well, is a profitable field for her husband. Yet, caution is also necessary: a wife should not be given too much authority nor too little, i.e. a balance is

⁶⁷⁹ Dieleman, "Fear of Women? Representations of Women in Demotic Wisdom Texts," 41.

⁶⁸⁰ Teyssaire, "The Portrayal of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Tale", 107.

⁶⁸¹ Teyssaire, "The Portrayal of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Tale". Teyssaire does not clarify what the social expectations are for the Mistress of the House, but since she is referring to an "opposite" image, social expectation to the mistress of the house would include such notions as loyalty towards the husband.

⁶⁸² Translation following: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 139.

required for her to remain faithful. If that balance is not continual, she becomes unpredictable and pursues the fulfillment of her desires.⁶⁸³ Here, the exact word for “sexual favor” is “vagina” (*k3.t*), which is the same word found in *Two Brothers*, where Anubis chased Bata in order to kill him because he thought that Bata had raped his wife. Bata then said to Anubis that the entire conflict between them only began because of a “sexually aroused whore” (*k3.t t3-ḥw3.t*: 7, 8).⁶⁸⁴ Intertextually, the parallel is observable: Anubis’ wife as in the maxim had offered Bata sex in order to fulfill her desires. Since Middle and Late Egyptian fiction does not provide explicit descriptions of the adulterous woman, *Two Brothers* is here a unique example in providing an overt attitude against this particular nature of women: “sexually aroused whore.” Such a categorization of infidel women is not explicitly expressed before the *Petese Stories* or Greco-Roman period.

Wisdom literature also reminds the audience that the nature of the husband, i.e. the manner in which he treats his wife, is influential on how she may end up behaving. For example the wisdom text of *Any* states:

Do not be firm (rwd) (against) your wife in her house. When you know she is efficient (3ḥ). Do not say to her. “Where is it? Get it!”, when she has put it in the right place. Let your eyes observe in silence (gr). Then you recognize (lit. “swallow, absorb” ʿm) her skill. It is joy when your hand is with her (nfr rš iw dr.t=k ḥnʿ=st). There are many who do not know this. If a man desists from strife at home (3b ḥnw? m pr=f), he will not encounter its beginning (bw gm=f p3y=f ḥ3t). Every man who founds a household (grg m pr) should hold back the hasty heart (smn ḥ3ty 3s).⁶⁸⁵

In its own right, this passage acknowledges the wife’s qualities, her “skills” of performing her duties in the household. Moreover, it focuses on the husband’s character, as the source of marital conflict: a husband can be controlling (Do not control...), ignorant of the wife’s skills and the joy of cooperation

⁶⁸³ Various interpretations: Faulkner reads the ʿwy as the dual of ʿ, “condition,” hence he translates “*k3.t di.t=s n ʿwy=s*” “A vagina is what she gives for her condition,” i.e. sex is the price she pays for being given a home: in Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 167, n. 44. Others understood ʿwy as “arms,” e.g. “Eine Schlampe (aber) sollte sich selbst überlassen bleiben(?):” Burkard, “Die Lehre des Ptahhotep,” In *Weisheitstexte*, 209.

⁶⁸⁴ *k3.t* “vagina” is attested in *Wb.*, 5, 93) but the meaning of *t3-ḥw3.t* is still unclear. One interpretation is “faulen, verwesen,” as in something “old” or “used:” T. Andrzejewski, “L’expression KA.t Hw.t,” *Rocznik orientalistyczny* 22, (1957): 59. Another interpretation is “perturbatrice,” i.e. a woman violating social conventions through approaching a man while having her period, cf. F. Servajean, “Le conte des Deux Frères (3): à propos de l’expression kA.t tAHw.t,” *ENIM* 5, (2012): 103-13. Regardless of the exact meaning of the word, it clearly has negative connotations and the translation here applied follows: Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 84. This is the closest to rendering an abuse or profanity.

⁶⁸⁵ Reference for text edition in note 331; present translation: Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume II: The New Kingdom*, 143.

in a relationship (many do not know this. It is joy when your hand is with her), confrontational (if a man desists from strife...), and impatient (hold back a hasty heart). A wife has authority in her domain (her house), where she is competent (when you know she is efficient...), and she will not cause friction in the marriage, unless she is pushed to do so (if a man desists from strife...).

The Demotic instruction of Ankhsheshonq is more preoccupied with the infidel wife in comparison with the instructions of *Ptahhotep* and *Any*. But it also reminds the reader that a husband's character can drive his wife to adultery: "That a woman allows one to have sex with her, is in accordance with the character of her husband" (*i.ir šm.t dy.t nk=w s r t3 3my.t n p3y=s hy*, 20, 19). Accordingly, the three sources; Ptahhotep, Any and Ankhsheshonq, complement each other and acknowledge that a husband's character can be the force behind his wife's dark side. Intertextually, they all reflect that a balance of quality is influential in a marital relationship.

Ankhsheshonq, however, has general opinions on the nature of the wife, which may seem rather contradictory at first sight. 13, 22; 18, 15; and 25, 20 remind the reader of a wife's unreliable libido as the drive behind her adultery,⁶⁸⁶ her heart being set on her own sexual satisfaction: "What she does with her husband today, she does with another man tomorrow" (*p3 nty-iw-iw=s ir=f irm p3y=s hy n p3 hrw hr ir=s irm ky rsty*, 13, 22); "Do not rejoice over the beauty of your wife, her heart is set on he who has sex with her" (*i.ir h3ty.t=s hr p3 (i.ir).nk=s*, 18, 15); "If a woman does not like her husband's property, there is another man in her heart. (*i.ir šm.t tm mr p3 nkt n p3y=s hy gr hwt i.ir-hr h3ty.t=s*, 25, 20).

The remaining two maxims concerning adultery in Ankhsheshonq (21, 18-19 and 23, 6-7) concern the man who has sex with married women. One instructs that if a married man has sex with a married woman, retaliation will take place and the same will happen to his own wife, except on the floor rather than on the bed: "Do not have sex with a woman who has a husband. He who has sex on a bed with a woman who has a husband, it is on the ground that one has sex with his wife" (*m-ir nk šm.t wn-mtw=s hy p3 nty nk šm.t iw wn-mtw=s hy hr glg i.ir=w nk t3y=f hm.t hr p3 itn*, 21, 18-19). The second specifies that a man who loves a married woman will be killed on her doorstep: "Do not love a woman who has a husband. He who loves a woman who has a husband, will be killed on her doorstep" (*m-ir mr šm.t iw wn-mtw=s hy p3 nty mr šm.t iw wn-mtw=s hy i.ir=w hdb.t=f hr t3y=s pn3.t*, 23, 6-7). Conceivably, these two maxims may be understood in light of a differentiation between *nk* and *mr*. Literary texts discussed in this chapter portray *mr* as a reciprocal relation between two individuals of distinct hierarchical positions in society: e.g. the love from superior to his subordinate, or between husband and wife. Killing a wife's lover on her doorstep thus indicates the intrusive nature the

⁶⁸⁶ Dieleman, "Fear of Women? Representations of Women in Demotic Wisdom Texts," 12.

lover's attempt to establish *mr* with a married woman. *nk* on the other hand, lies outside the paradigm of *mr*: a momentary action ("an hour" or some "time").⁶⁸⁷

The teachings of Ptahhotep and Any accord with the principles Dieleman identified in Demotic wisdom texts: representations of women convey a norm that bad conduct of a wife may occur due to the character of her husband, or in the quality of the marriage.⁶⁸⁸ This exposes the durability of the motif and rejects the generalization that wisdom texts solely focus on the negative aspects of the female psyche. Fictional narratives and wisdom texts here discussed all seem to recognize the positive as well as the negative aspect of the female nature, but Demotic narratives overtly characterize women as good or bad (*mnh*; *wyhy*), and acknowledge the nature of the male gender as flawed as well: Khamwase is an excellent example.

Ankhsheshonq in particular distinguishes between the consequences of adultery when the culprit is an active or passive participant in the adultery. The differentiation between men (active) and women (passive) in these maxims may lie in the intrusive nature of the active party. This is paralleled in, for example, references to homosexual activity where the same distinction is found.⁶⁸⁹ For example, men who perform the act of *mr* or *nk* on a married woman are severely punished: death or retaliation. But women who are caught in adultery are replaced with a new wife: "When you find your wife with her lover, take for yourself a bride as well" (*iw=k gm t3y=k hm.t irm p3y=s nk t3y n=k šlt r-h sw* 13, 12).

From a socio-cultural perspective, the emphasis in Demotic wisdom texts on prohibiting sexual relations with married women may be understood in light of Dieleman's perspective of the "property-women-heirs" triangle.⁶⁹⁰ Here, control over property implies control over heirs. Producing and nurturing these heirs lies within the power of women, but men can never be absolutely certain whether their heirs are unquestionably their own children. Regarding inheritance, it thus becomes of fundamental importance that one's own offspring are those who inherit the property left behind: anxiety concerning the dark side of women thus reflects fear of losing control. The answer to this problem in the wisdom texts is thus (ideally) severe control over female sexuality: women should only be available to their husbands, a system of control.⁶⁹¹ This further explains the severe punishment of

⁶⁸⁷ *nk* only occurs in *Amasis and the Sailor* between husband and wife, see page xx, and *mr* only once in context of adultery. Overall there is a separation between the two concepts.

⁶⁸⁸ Dieleman, "Fear of Women? Representations of Women in Demotic Wisdom Texts," 22.

⁶⁸⁹ cf. the motif of king Pepi in §(3.4)

⁶⁹⁰ Dieleman, "Fear of Women? Representations of Women in Demotic Wisdom Texts," 44-5.

⁶⁹¹ Dieleman, "Fear of Women? Representations of Women in Demotic Wisdom Texts," 44.

men who have sex with married women in Ankhsheshonq's maxims: the active party causes the confusion of offspring.⁶⁹²

In narrative fiction *Cheops Court* and *Two Brothers* differ in a significant point. The women in both stories suffer capital punishment for their actions: death and obliteration of their bodies. This motif may be interpreted in light of the significance of preserving the deceased's body in Egyptian culture. Webaner's wife is burned to death and her body was disposed of in the river, Anubis' wife was killed and her body was thrown to the dogs to feed on, while her lover was eaten by a crocodile that disappeared with his body in the bottom of the river. Without their bodies, these individuals cannot have a burial, mourning, or preservation of mortuary cult and thus no chances for life in the world beyond. Accordingly the adulterers suffer complete extermination in this life and the next: they become non-existent.

Bata's fate, on the other hand, was different. Initially, his brother wanted to kill him because he thought that he had raped his wife. But Bata, who was frustrated over this false accusation and the fact that Anubis was unwilling to listen to his justified denial, confronted his brother and "got a reed knife,

⁶⁹² Dieleman had noted that being a virgin before marriage became important in Hellenistic Egypt. This was noted by Montserrat: Montserrat, *Sex and Society in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, 81-2. Montserrat's example was a marriage contract in Latin from the second half of the 2nd century AD: pMich VII 434 (Philadelphia: Arsonoite nome), cf. J. E. Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood*, 126ff; J. Rowlandson, ed. *Women and Society in Greek and Roman Egypt: A Sourcebook*, 136. An online edition of the papyrus is available at: <http://papyri.info/ddbdp/chla;4:249>. Here a Greek woman was given in marriage to a Roman citizen. The text states that the marriage was performed for the creation of legitimate children and that bride's virginity was an integral part of this factor. Her father stated that he had placed her in matrimony, a virgin, in accordance with the "Julian law" concerning marriage, which was "passed for the purpose of procreating children. The "Julian law" (Lex Julia) referred to a moral legislation introduced by Augustus in 18-17 BC, encouraging marriage and having children (lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus) and establishing adultery as a private and public crime (lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis). The Julian law was particularly severe concerning adultery: a father was permitted to kill with his own hands an adulterer caught in the act with his daughter in his own house or in that of his son-in-law, no matter what his rank may be. Roman women in Egypt were expected to follow this law as their sisters in Rome. It is difficult to ascertain to what extent Egyptian women of Roman citizenship followed this law. Since all Egyptians were made Roman citizens in 212 AD, they would in practice have been expected to follow Roman law and women would (formally) have been expected to be virgins before marriage. But in the Egyptian language, there is no term that matches the definition of "virgin" or the state of virginity. Distinctions in terminology seem to have existed between nubile females who had given birth and those who had not (*nfr.t*, or *rn.t*) rather than those who had engaged in sexual activity and those who had not. The closest notion of "virgin" is in the Demotic passage (broken context): "will we be able to let her give birth to a male child without anyone yet having slept with her?" (*sdr irm=s*). Here the question is giving birth without having slept with anyone and not being a virgin before marriage. I accordingly do not consider virginity as a principle in Egypt in the context of the present discussion. References: "Lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus" limited marriage across social class boundaries (Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, 54: 16, 1-1). "Lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis" punished adultery with banishment: both two guilty parties were sent to different islands, and part of their property was confiscated. Fathers were permitted to kill daughters and their partners in adultery. Husbands could kill the partners under certain circumstances and were required to divorce adulterous wives (Paul, *Opinions*, 2: 26.1-8, 10-12 & 14-17), see: R. A. Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome*, 105-8. For Terms such as *nfr.(w)t* and *rn.t* as equivalent to Greek *parthenos*, i.e. designations for young women who have not given birth, cf. Green, "In Search of Ancient Egyptian Virgins: A Study in Comparative Values," 90-8. See also the motif in §(3.4) with king Sneferu and the *nfr.(w)t*. for the Demotic passage, see: Ryholt, "An Elusive Narrative Belonging to the Cycle of Stories about the Priesthood of Heliopolis," In *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen, 23-27 August 1999*, 365.

cut off his phallus (*šꜥd ḥnw=f*), threw it into the water,” and became feeble (7, 9- 8, 1). In this context, Diodorus’ account regarding adultery may be recalled:

Severe also were their laws touching women. For if a man had violated a free married woman, they stipulated that he be emasculated, considering that such a person by a single unlawful act had been guilty of the three greatest crimes, assault, abduction, and confusion of offspring. (Diodorus 1.78.5)

The particular theme that *Two Brothers* and Diodorus have in common is the concept of rape, i.e. Bata was thought to have raped Anubis’ wife and Diodorus claims that emasculation is stipulated for raping a married woman. In this respect, Bata’s reaction may symbolically be linked to such a “norm,” where the member committing the crime was amputated. This principle is also reflected in the Code of Hammurabi (Mesopotamia: early 18th century BC):⁶⁹³ a tongue that speaks ill is cut off (nr. 192); a hand is amputated if it strikes a parent (nr. 195), commits an error in surgery (nr. 218), or steals from another (nr. 253); a wet nurse’s breast is cut off if the child under her care dies (nr. 194). Thus, in the same manner that theft could be punished with cutting off the hand, emasculation indicates a principle where the member used to commit rape was amputated. Another parallel to emasculation is in the Demotic *Castration Story* (Manuscript: 2nd century AD)⁶⁹⁴ in which a “great man” (*rmt ꜥ3*) was emasculated as “punishment” (*ir btw*)⁶⁹⁵ for a crime and made into a eunuch⁶⁹⁶ of the king’s Harem. In the following scene, a general reports to the king:

*I let him be taken to the physician’s place. I let the knife of doing work (i.e. castration) be brought for him. I let his male members [be removed] from him. I let him be made into a eunuch, a man of the private chamber. It is the abomination (i.e. punishment) of a great man.*⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹³ M. T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*.

⁶⁹⁴ R. Salim, *A Story of Crime and Castration (Papyrus Carlsberg 448)*, Thesis (Masters), University of Copenhagen, 2008, 28.

⁶⁹⁵ *ir btw* is attested in pInsinger: 7/11, 12/3, 23/2; pCarlsberg 207: x+2/8-9, and *Petese Stories*: CI, 2/10. Most of the examples refer to “capital punishment”, but in the present context the castration is performed as the “punishment of a great man”. For further discussion of *ir btw*, see Quack and Ryholt, “Notes on the Setne Story P. Carlsberg 207,” In *A Miscellany of Demotic Texts and Studies*., 149.

⁶⁹⁶ *sr* originally means “Magistrate” (*Wb.*, 4, p. 188). In Coptic *sr* becomes the designation for “eunuch” ⲥⲓⲟⲩⲡ. The term *ir sr* corresponds to Coptic ⲡⲥⲓⲟⲩⲡ “make into eunuch” (*Copt. Dict.*, p. 371a).

⁶⁹⁷ [tw]=y di.t ꝓy=w s r tꜥ s.t swnw tw=y in=w tꜥ mdy n ir ipy r-r=f di=y [ꝓy=w] n=f ꜥꜥ.wt n ḥwt n dr.t=f tw=y di.t ir=w s n sr rmt n ḥnhy.t btw n rmt ꜥ3 [pꜥ]y.

Finally, and within the same context, the Khamwase/Tabubu scene may be recalled where, just as the former was about to have sex with Tabubu, he woke up naked and in a heated state with his phallus inside a *šhyʔ* (5, 30). Two signs indicating dung, and either water or a pot, determine the uncertain word *šhyʔ*, which is solely attested in this text. Its meaning is unknown, but seeing that Khamwase was about to participate in “unauthorized” sexual intercourse, the disfigurement of his phallus could be interpreted in the same light as *Two Brothers* and Diodorus’ account. Khamwase awoke with his phallus inside (*hn*) the *šhyʔ*. Whether it was physically removed from his body and placed *in* the *šhyʔ* or whether the *šhyʔ* covered his phallus is hard to determine. I find the former case more likely considering his physical condition when he woke up: he was in a heated state indicating illness, which echoes Bata’s state after his emasculation. This is further paralleled in *Castration Story* where “the great man” suffers greatly after his castration by the chief physician where he is treated subsequently:

The knife of doing work (i.e. castration) was brought for [him. His] male [members were removed] from him. He [was made] (into) a eunuch, a man of the private chambers. [It is the] abomination (i.e. punishment) of a [great] man (...). The moment these things happened, he fell to the [ground]. He [...] his mouth being open [in] a great cry without knowing where on earth he was. [...] was made [...] He was seated after his resting on some cushions [of wo]ol. [...] while he (i.e. the physician) let the remedies of quince (?) be prepared for him. (Castration Story, C2, 1-3)⁶⁹⁸

The ailment and disoriented state of the victims is a common feature in the three sources discussed here. Khamwase’s condition is therefore likely to have been a reaction to his phallus actually being removed and placed inside the *šhyʔ*. Accordingly, literary sources convey the norm that unpleasant harm is inflicted on the phallus when it is in a place it should not be. The problem with regards to *Castration Story* is that no extant fragment reveals the actual crime committed by the “great man,” but when interpreting in the context of the literary sources as whole, emasculation as punishment for rape seems most likely.

The verb *nk* appears in the Deir el Medina sources as a colloquial expression of having sex for the sake of momentary carnal pleasure. Its equivalent appears in narrative literature as the notion of spending time or passing an hour together. Here, in contrast to *mr*, literature portrays a reciprocal nature of *nk* in

⁶⁹⁸ Salim, "Story of Crime and Castration (Papyrus Carlsberg 448)", 22.

the conduct of gift-giving: a fine gift or a sum of money in exchange for sexual favors. Married women who indulge in such behavior commit a “great crime” against their husbands: a social attitude in expressed in marriage contracts. These women represent wives who have violated the bond of *mr* with their husbands. Accordingly, they have no moral (*wyhy*) and fail to perform their social role as virtuous wives (*mnh*), in Bata’s own words they are sexually aroused whores, while Tabubu describes such a woman as “lowly.”

While official documents, i.e. marriage contracts only acknowledge the woman as the main performer of the “great crime,” literary texts here discussed all recognize the positive as well the negative aspect of the female nature. Women are overtly characterized as good or bad (*mnh*; *wyhy*) in fictional narratives. These women suffer death and obliteration in fictional narratives while wisdom texts mostly are confined to warning against the scornful nature of the wife. In literature, on the contrary, men are also fallible: the texts admit that the character of husbands can affect the constitution of marriage, and they condemn a man (i.e. lover) who attempts to transgress the bond of *mr* between husband and wife and this kind of man is killed on the wife’s doorstep. *Ankhshehshonq* in particular is mostly concerned with the man who commits adultery with a married woman. The text differentiates between men (active) and women (passive) in acts of adultery, which I understand as an expression of the intrusive nature of the active party in the contexts of the “property-women-heirs” triangle: the active party causes the confusion of offspring, an act that deserves the most severe punishment. This is also reflected in fiction where the norm is that harm is inflicted on the phallus when it is “in a place it should not be.” Fictional narratives provide several examples of men who are punished for sexual crimes: Bata and the “great man” are examples of the principle of emasculation for rape and Khamwase was about to suffer the same punishment for committing adultery.

Middle and Late Egyptian literary texts portray a cultural norm that fostered a reciprocal relationship between a husband and wife centering on the notion of “love/desire” (*mr*). Here *mr* is described from a material and practical perspective: the man provides the wife with everything good and the ideal wife, in return, becomes a profitable field for her husband, bearing children and sustaining the household. Narrative fiction mainly portrayed the ideal wife through literary characterization: a name that reflects her ideal nature and the social attitude towards such nature. This particular literary tool appears to have been overlooked to some degree, leaving some scholars with the impression that literary texts mainly focused on the dark side of women. Rather, what seems to have been the case is that the ideal wife was not conceptualized in Middle and Late Egyptian narratives in distinct terminologies.

Portrayals of the ideal wife are offered in fictional narratives throughout the historical period of ancient Egypt. As a whole, however, motifs of “good” and “bad” wives do not seem to have been a subject of great interest in the extant Middle and Late Egyptian fictional narratives.

In the 9th century BC, marriage became an official practice. Festivities connected to the union were a private matter. An impression of this can be found in the 2nd century AD narrative of pCarlsberg 422. Here, the “celebration of taking a wife” involved the family members and certain customs such as that of the “bride and her companion.” Marriage contracts proved a useful source for interpreting the stories of *Merira and King Sasobek* and *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah*. In the former, Merira’s concern that his marriage would technically be dissolved after his death is revealed. In the latter, Tabubu’s intention with the “annuity contract” and “gift of a woman” document is exposed as a manner of luring Khamwase into a new marriage agreement with her in return for her sexual favor, i.e. the gift.

The official documents of the New Kingdom reveal that rules of conduct in relationships were based in tradition. These traditions surfaced and were emphasized in official complaints when necessary expressing sexual misconduct as a transgression of cultural norms. From the Ptolemaic period onwards the ideal wife is conceptualized in the terms “virtuous,” “good,” and “praised” (*mnh*, *nfr*, *hs*). She is contrasted in the woman who possesses all the antonyms of that nature: adulterous, wicked, and scornful (*wyhy*, *bn*, *hsf*). This latter category of women is the one who commits the “great crime found in women,” i.e. adultery, a crime officially recorded in the 9th century BC as “found in women”. All together, these sources provide perfect examples of how narrativity consults and addresses social reality.

Adultery in narrative fiction of all periods is instigated through gift giving, which was socially an implicit request for sexual favors. This theme occurs metaphorically in *Ptahhotep* and *Ankhseshonq*, except that both texts only focus on the woman’s part in the act: she offers sexual favors to others than her husband if she is discontent at home. But the crucial factor here is that both texts acknowledge the husband’s character as an influential element instigating her improper conduct. Wisdom texts in general advise maintaining the reciprocal balance of *mr* in marriage, a tradition that goes back to the earliest literary texts of Egypt.

The verb *nk* was a colloquial expression of having sex for the sake of momentary carnal pleasure. This is described in all narrative fiction as spending time or passing an hour together. As a social “antonym” to *mr*, *nk* represented the instant and non-durable relationship the reciprocal nature of which was the principle of a gift in return for sex. Married women who indulged in such behavior committed the “great crime” against their husbands and violated the bond of *mr* with their husbands: they were immoral women (*wyhy*) disregarding their social role.

In general, Middle and New Kingdom stories, with the exception of Bata, propose complete obliteration of the adulterers. This may be seen in light of the absence of official marriage contracts where a man could dissolve the marriage and deprive his wife of her economic benefits if she was unfaithful and where adultery cases were locally solved with the involvement of the community. A literary response to this circumstance may thus be read in fiction: a complete extinction from existence in the world of the living as well as that of dead. In this sense, fiction addresses social reality rather than consulting it. Literary texts from the Ptolemaic period onwards provide several aspects of adultery: fiction acknowledged men's capability of committing the "great crime" as well as women; wisdom texts warned against the immoral nature of women, it recognized the husbands' character as influential in marriage, but it mainly focused on the imposer on the marital union, i.e. the man who slept with a married woman. Accordingly, fiction adhered to, and reflected on, social realities while wisdom texts mainly presented a male perspective on the matter. As Dieleman noted, this aspect of wisdom texts lies in their focus on power relations: men must control their wives to ensure that their heirs were genetically their own. This principle is most vividly portrayed in the harm that is inflicted on the phallus when it ventures into forbidden places.

(6) Cultural Identity and Self-presentation in Ancient Egyptian Fictional Narratives: Conclusion

The present study is anchored in a framework of New Historicism and thus largely focused on the communication between historicity and the textuality of history, seeing that the social world was constantly being shaped by the very texts it produced and vice-versa. Considering this aspect of the theoretical framework, it has not been possible to include more than the selected four subjects as the main focus of the investigation, namely priests, kings, warriors and women. However, limiting the study to these motifs in a diachronic analysis has proven fruitful because it allows a perspective on the development of ancient Egyptian literary traditions, recognizing durable as well as innovative themes, and providing an insight on the cultural context in which they were embedded.

Chapter 2 sought to investigate the literary function and portrayal of the magician priest. The entire corpus, from Middle Kingdom to Roman Period, centers on magician hero figures that were perceived as historical. Here, I have argued that monuments would have formed one excellent source of inspiration for developing the literary characters, as seen with figures like Imhotep, Djadjaemankh and Khamwase.

In general, the magician priest's affiliation with Thoth as his source of effective and restricted magical knowledge, knowledge unavailable to ordinary humans, is emphasized. In Middle Egyptian literary traditions, the priest employs his craft and wisdom within a courtly setting: he demonstrates his skills through magic feats, he provides activity advice for the king, and he foretells the future (*Khufu's Court*). In Demotic literary traditions, the priest exercises his skill in a different setting. His craft now affects the entire country and the course of history as well: he aids the king in defeating Egypt's enemies (*Khamwase and Siosiris & Djoser and Imhotep*) and he himself may also subject the king to reprimands and assessment of character (*Merira and Sasobek*). The magician priest in the Demotic literary tradition was thus part of a separate class of society, whose abilities influenced almost every aspect of life, including the security of the king.

I have argued that the characters of the magician priests conveyed an image that conformed to a contemporary self-reflection of the priestly audience and at the same time idyllically portrayed that image to the outer world. This is particularly the case with the Demotic literary tradition of Greco-Roman Egypt. In light of the temple origin of the majority of the texts, the attestations of the priest as the source of several accounts in the Greek histories, and the image of the priest himself that is preserved in the narratives, I suggest the involvement of this class in producing the stories. This is seen in relation to preservation of cultural identity and power (in the form of knowledge) positioning the

priests as members of a choice sphere in society. This effort, in my opinion, proved successful also in the Demotic literary tradition which is seen through the circulation of stories about the exploits of famous magicians across Egypt and in some cases even in Aramaic and Greek, such as Horus son of Pwensh (Aramaic), and Petese and Nechepsos (Greek). Petese of Heliopolis was adapted to Greek tradition and thus from Greek to the Arabic tradition, evolving from magician, sage, and astrologer to alchemist in the later sources. Seeing that the majority of the protagonists in Demotic stories, especially from the Tebtunis temple library, were actual historical figures such as Imhotep, Khamwase and Inaros, I find it very likely that an historical Petese did exist. From the Greek sources, the fame of Petese was also transmitted into the medieval Arabic world (*Kitab el-Fibris*), which reflects special recognition for this particular magician, who was in the Greek papyrus Rylands 63 described as the teacher of none other than Plato himself, one of the most celebrated Hellenic philosophers.

Chapter 3 investigates narratives of ancient Egypt as a literary area in which the nature of kingship could be explored. As long as the motifs did not concern the ruling pharaoh, this was indeed possible. Middle and New Kingdom literary traditions express a focus on portraying the courtly aspect of kingship taking place within the borders of the country. Here, different aspects of the human king were portrayed: he could be judging criminals, sailing on a boat, engaging in sexual adventures or be the subject of the agony of fate. These aspects of kingship were understood within a framework of the cultural principles of the time, raising subjects such as Maat, Fate, and Righteousness, within which intertextuality formed an essential referential background for the audience.

From the Saite period onwards a complete humanization of the king takes place that subjects his character to evaluation from god as well as man. Fictional narratives from this period onwards concentrate on the king's deeds outside of the royal court: his devotion to the gods could be questioned and within the martial sphere his ability to subjugate Egypt's enemies could be shadowed by warrior princes such as Inaros and his clan (e.g., Petubastis). Accordingly, Demotic narratives present an explicit attitude towards the efficient vs. the inefficient king, providing examples (even if we would regard them as fictitious) of the chaos that may develop when a king fails to carry out his responsibilities towards the gods. Naturally, the beneficent king who sustains his obligations to the gods prospers and conquers effectively (e.g., Necho I). These stories formed important sources for many details about various kings preserved in the Greek histories. Simultaneously, the Greek sources evaluated the Egyptian motifs within their own cultural sphere, which resulted, sometimes, in different attitudes or interpretations of the same source as exemplified in the Egyptian contra Hellenic traditions about king Amasis and the motifs in *Blinding of Pharaoh*. Some kings are excluded from the Greek material, and some are yet to be found in the Egyptian sources, a distribution which, aside from the

question of preservation, may well reflect such different cultural assessments. One example is King Senwosret who seems to have been the most admired king amongst the Greek writers, while only few Demotic manuscripts regarding this king have been identified so far.

It thus transpires that Middle and Late Egyptian literary traditions differ from Demotic traditions in that the latter is more focused on the function of narratives as historical sources, defining Egyptian history, and evaluating its historical kings. At the same time the value of the priests as mediators between kings and gods, as seen in for example *Merira and Siosiris*, form literary examples of their power as the negotiators between the two domains. Priests are now saving the king from foreign enemies (Siosiris/Horus son of Pwensh) and negotiating with the gods regarding the length of the king's life (Merira). These examples conform to the idea that the priesthood (as also seen in chapter 2) was involved in forming the literature in which their influence in maintaining order is enforced, thus exalting their power and authority.

Chapter 4 then discusses the Inaros Cycle from a Greco-Roman cultural perspective, addressing the negotiation of Hellenistic and Egyptian traditions that took root from the beginning of Ptolemaic rule in Egypt. The analysis demonstrates that during this process of cultural encounters, several aspects of tradition were open to change while others remained unaffected. During this period, room was provided for native Egyptians to climb the social hierarchy, which was particularly profitable for Egyptian soldiers, who became part of the kleruchic system and gained great wealth, and became part of the Hellenized Greek speaking class whose presence is well documented in the Fayoum region. It also shows that Roman rule introduced a principle of descent that became an important factor in distributing resources, something that incited an increased ethnic consciousness. As a result, cultural consciousness was boosted in the metropoleis, even though many of their inhabitants did not qualify to be considered Hellenic, and traditional values that signified Hellenistic identity were preserved and practiced, such as literature, theatre and the gymnasium. In these regions, the richest sources of Greek literary traditions are Oxyrhynchus and the Fayoum region where classics and new compositions were read, copied and performed, and the Homeric epic remained an important part of the education. The temple of Tebtunis remained the "famous tax-exempt temple," although the priesthood and its institution were all reduced in size and number in Roman Egypt, and many became part of the Greek-speaking elite who associated with their Hellenic surroundings outside the temple. It is also from this temple that the majority of the Inaros narratives that have so far been identified survive.

In relation to the process of Hellenic and Egyptian cultural encounters, I argue that the financial decline of the Egyptian temple in the Roman period forced many priests to seek new venues for exercising their traditional authority. This resulted in their assimilation to Hellenistic "stereotyping,"

where the priests extended native priestly and scribal traditions to foreign markets; temple traditions were rearranged and “new” spells (in Greek as well) were composed to suit Hellenistic taste. Thus, the Egyptian priests confirmed the Hellenic notions of their exotic nature, and native traditions suiting the newcomers’ needs were created, while the priesthood simultaneously fostered their authority by virtue of their archaic history. Interpretations of the priest’s image thus occur in Greek and Latin texts in complete opposition to his image in contemporary Egyptian narratives. The predominant portrayal in Greek and Latin texts is one of the priest who practiced his skills for money, but the “skills” themselves remained in accordance with native Egyptian traditions such as the priest who controls animals, gives life to inanimate objects, and is an expert in divination and astrology. On the other hand, the cultural encounter sparked the development of a new type of literary fiction in Egyptian tradition, namely the Inaros Cycle, which I argue was a result of adaptation of Egyptian literature to the Hellenic notion of “hero.”

With regards to the literary form of the Inaros Cycle, I argue that the narratives preserved many traditional Egyptian literary characteristics; most importantly their composition exclusively in the Egyptian language and their focus on historical characters. Nevertheless, I distinguish the cycle from any earlier Egyptian narrative and compare its components with Homeric motifs: Inaros and Pektur are reminiscent of Achilles and his companion Patroclus. The value of Inaros’ armor, the conflict concerning its ownership, and its handover to the hero’s son are paralleled in the motif of Achilles’ shield, Odysseus and Ajax’ quarrel over its ownership, and its return to Neoptolemus, Achilles’ son. Further motifs that support the hypothesis that the stories were mainly composed with epic poetry as the main influence are the Amazons, the daemons that interfere with humans, and the warriors who combat before spectators. However, I point out that influence does not automatically imply dependence. This can be observed when Greek motifs in the adaptation process, such as the tragic death of the lovers, were simply not accepted but altered in a manner that makes sense to the Egyptian author/audience.

With regards to the function of the Inaros Cycle, I argue that the priests were not the only audience for the narratives. On the contrary, I understand the fact that the texts were written only in Egyptian language as a conscious choice, ensuring that the priesthood remained the only conveyers of the contents of the manuscripts outside the temple. In this respect, the priests would have been the source of knowledge on Egypt and its past, which is a conception that agrees with my conclusions in chapters 2 and 3. I see the Inaros Cycle as historical romance transmitted by the priesthood to their surroundings, but I also argue that the Greek epic tradition was influential in forming a warrior identity for the Hellenistic elite. I find it possible to identify this warrior identity among the Hellenized group of

indigenous Egyptian warriors who lived in the Fayoum region for many generations. I accordingly add another function to the narratives, which conforms to Hellenic values of epic poetry, namely as a mirror through which warriors saw themselves.

As a whole, chapters 2-4 have tried to expose that the focus in the three types of Demotic stories, about magicians, kings and warriors, shifts from the royal court to the outside world within and beyond the borders of Egypt as far as India. Here lies the difference from the Middle and Late Egyptian narrative tradition: a “history” of Egypt is narrated featuring the kings, priest and warriors who had played their roles during periods of national trauma. Some historical figures were inefficient (Petubasits), some were authoritative and influential (Necho I) and reached the borders of India (Inaros); some defeated the Nubians (Horus son of Pwensh), others the Assyrians (Imhotep); some were mediators between past and present (Khamwase), and some were warriors in their own right whose weapons alone stood as a symbol of their authority and martial skills (Inaros).

In chapter 5, I turn the focus to the portrayal of the “good” and the “bad” wife in Egyptian fictional narratives. I argue that Middle and Late Egyptian literary traditions portrayed a cultural norm that promoted a reciprocal relationship between husband and wife that centered on the notion of “love/desire” (*mr*). Here *mr* is described from a material and practical perspective: the husband provides for his wife with everything good and the ideal wife, in return, becomes a profitable field for her husband, bearing children and sustaining the household. I have provided examples of this aspect in the Middle Egyptian tale of the *Eloquent Peasant* and a letter from a husband to his deceased wife from the 19th dynasty (pLeiden I, 371) that alludes to such a principle.

I have also argued against the idea that ancient Egyptian literature mainly portrayed women in a negative light and provide examples of the opposite through arguing that characterization was applied as a tool of expressing attitudes towards a character’s nature by means of name-giving. Thus, Merit, the peasant’s wife, is characterized as a “loved one” implying her nature as ideal and simultaneously expressing an attitude towards that nature. I posit that this literary tool is found in Middle and Late Egyptian as well as Demotic narratives, where women serve as ideal models even though their roles are minor in the stories (e.g., Rudjedet, “strong of durability” and Henoutnefret, “beautiful mistress”). This aspect of literature appears to have been overlooked, leaving some scholars with the impression that literary texts mainly focused on the “dark side of women.” I rather understand that the ideal wife in Middle and Late Egyptian narratives was not “conceptualized” in explicit terminology concerning her nature. On the same note, I argue that unfaithful women in the stories are often nameless (*Cheops Court*, and *Two Brothers*). These women are severely punished in the narratives and I understand their

namelessness as a literary tool that presents the audience with general examples of women of such kind, i.e. they are generalizations: “any woman” who commits adultery.

I then discuss the emergence of “marriage contracts” in the 9th century BC in terms of terminology and I provide one extant example of a “wedding celebration” from a 2nd century. I further provide two examples of how marriage contracts may be useful when interpreting certain motifs in fictional narratives, and offer my reading of passages in *Merira and Sasobek* and *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah*. I argue that Merira was concerned that his marriage would technically be dissolved after his death, and I understand that Tabubu’s purpose with the “annuity contract” and “gift of a woman” documents in *Khamwase and Naneferkaptah* are a manner of trapping Khamwase into a “new” marriage agreement with her in return for her sexual favor, i.e. “the gift.”

I have also discussed the portrayals of the ideal vs. bad wife in Demotic literature and argued that from the Ptolemaic period these aspects of character are conceptualized in explicit notions such as virtuous, good, and praised (*mnh*, *nfr*, *hs*) as opposed to immoral, wicked, and scornful (*wyhy*, *bn*, *hsf*). These women were exemplified in narratives such as *Petese Stories* which treats the subject in a manner echoed in the Greek florilegia. Accordingly, the Greek expression ψόγος γυναικῶν may be parallel to the Demotic *hsf n shm.t* both of which translate “blame of women.” All together, the picture produced by these intertextual references is that stories about virtuous and scornful women were very popular and were circulating as early as the Ptolemaic period. My interpretation of the motifs of wives’ characters in the Demotic narratives thus stands against this background.

I also consider motifs of adultery, and I have tried to demonstrate, that in narrative fiction of all periods adultery is always instigated through gift-giving, which I see as an implicit request for sexual favors that would have been recognized by the audience. I have also discussed the verb *nk* as a colloquial expression for sexual intercourse. In narratives, this idiom is hardly used and adulterous affairs are referred to with expressions such as “spending time” or “passing an hour together” Here, I find it possible that “spending time” and “passing an hour” was an implicit reference to *nk*, i.e. simply sexual intercourse, which I understand as a social “antonym” to *mr* “love, desire.” I find that both categories encompass a reciprocal nature: one is gift-giving in return for sex; the other is in the marital union where a woman is provided for, in return for her being ideal in nature.

Furthermore, a general observation was made that Middle and Late Egyptian literary traditions, with the exception of Bata who was no adulterer, focus on women as adulterers when this subject is addressed. Here the women suffer complete obliteration which I interpret as fiction addressing social reality where the severest punishment materializes as the ideal. In reality, such problems were locally solved with the involvement of the community which I have tried to show through discussing the Deir

el-Medina documents. Narrative literature from the Ptolemaic period onwards, in contrast, acknowledged men's capability of committing adultery as well as women. I understand this aspect of fictional narratives as fiction adhering to, and reflecting on, social realities. However, the Demotic narratives conceptualize adulterous women through explicit categorizations as "scornful" and "wicked," which are matched in the marriage contract that refers to women's adultery as the "great crime (*btw*) found in women." Such categorizations are not attested for adulterous men in fictional narratives, an observation that exposes the male perspective on the subject.

Finally, I have tried to show that wisdom texts throughout the historical period warned against the immoral nature of women, but nevertheless recognized the husband's character as influential in marital relationships. Demotic wisdom texts, however, also focus on cautioning men against sleeping with married women. Here, I follow Dieleman's interpretation that wisdom text focus on power relations where men must ensure that their heirs were genetically their own. This principle, which is already observed in the New Kingdom story of *Two Brothers*, comes to light in narrative fiction through the motif of harm inflicted on the phallus when it "ventures into forbidden places."

I have tried to show that priests played a significant role in the creation of cultural identity which by the 7th century BC began to overshadow the royal image. By the Roman period, we can observe the results of cultural encounters in the form of a literary negotiation between Greek and Egyptian traditions. Egyptian priests confirmed Hellenic stereotyping by adapting native traditions to foreign needs, and are shown in Greek and Latin texts practicing their skills for money. In contrast, the cultural encounter occasioned the development of a new type of text in Egyptian literary tradition, namely the Inaros Cycle that exalted and recollected a heroic past of Egypt through foreign literary means. At the same time, certain traditions endured and were re-addressed through time, such as the portrayal of the good and bad woman. While fictional texts adhere to and reflect on social realities, wisdom texts focus on a male view on power relations. Regrettably, while the literal meaning of specific passages can often be extracted from the narratives, subtler features such as humor, sarcasm, irony, and absurdity are much more difficult to demonstrate. When a text only survives in a single copy it becomes even more challenging to analyze because our interpretation defines whether a difficult grammatical construction, or a seemingly out-of-context word, was the result of ancient copying errors, or rather a conscious choice of a rare expression for aesthetic effect by the ancient composer/copyist of the text. Therefore modern interpretations of Egyptian literature differ widely and the present thesis has sought to place itself within an analytical model that has remained as true as possible to these ancient texts.

(7) Abbreviations

<i>ÄgLes</i>	K. Sethe, <i>Ägyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im akademischen Unterricht: Texte des Mittleren Reiches</i> : Leipzig J. C. Heinrisch, 1958.
AH	<i>Aegyptiaca Helvetica</i> Geneva/Basel)
<i>AcOr</i>	<i>Acta Orientalia</i>
AfP	Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete (Stuttgart/Leipzig)
ÄgAbh	Ägyptologische Abhandlungen (Wiesbaden)
APF	Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete (Munich)
ARE	J. H. Breasted, <i>Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest</i> , 5 vols. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1906-7
ASAE	<i>Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte</i> (Berlin/Graz/Vienna)
<i>AoF</i>	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i> (Berlin)
BAe	<i>Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca</i> (Brussels)
BACE	Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology (North Ryde)
BdE	Bibliothèque d'Étude (IFAO, Cairo)
BEHE	Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études
BIFAO	Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (IFAO) (Cairo)
<i>CdE</i>	<i>Les Cahiers Caribéens d'Égyptologie</i> (Martinique)
CDPBM	Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the British Museum,
CGC	Catalogue General du Musée du Caire (series, Cairo Museum)
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East (Leiden)
CNRS	Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique (Paris)
CNWS	Centre of Non-Western Studies Publications (Leiden)
<i>Copt. Dict.</i>	W. E. Crum, <i>A Coptic Dictionary</i> , 1939
CRIPeL	Cahier de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille (Paris/Lille)
DS	Demotische Studien (Leipzig/Sommerhausen)
EA	<i>Egyptian Archaeology</i> , the Bulletin of the Egypt Exploration Society (EES) (London)
EES OP	Egypt Exploration Society Occasional Publications (London)
ENIM	Égypte nilotique et méditerranéenne
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain (Leiden)
EQÄ	Einführungen und Quellentexte zur Ägyptologie (Münster)
EU	<i>Egyptologische Uitgaven</i> (Leiden)

FIFAO	Fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale (IFAO) du Caire. Rapports préliminaires (Cairo)
GM	Göttinger Miscellen (Göttingen)
IBAES	Internet-Beitraege zur Aegyptologie und Sudanarchaeologie
JA	Journal Asiatique
JEAE	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology (EES, London)
JARCE	Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt (Boston/Princeton/New York/Cairo)
JJP	Journal of Juristic Papyrology (Warsaw)
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies (Chicago)
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies (Manchester)
JSSEA	Journal of the Society of the Study of Egyptian Antiquities (SSEA) (Toronto)
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament (Sheffield)
KÄT	Kleine Ägyptische Texte, ed. W. Helck (Wiesbaden)
LÄ	Lexikon der Ägyptologie, 7 vols., ed. W. Helck, E. Otto, W. Westendorf. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz 1972-95,
LEM	A. H. Gardiner, <i>Late-Egyptian Miscellanies</i> , 1937 (Brussels; BAe 7)
LES	A.H. Gardiner, <i>Late-Egyptian Stories</i> , 1932 (Brussels; BAe 1)
LCL	The Loeb Classical Library (London and Cambridge)
LingAeg SM	Linguae Aegyptia Studia monographica (Göttingen)
KRI	K.A. Kitchen, <i>Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical</i> , vols. 7 (Oxford, 1969-1990)
LRL	J. Cerny, <i>Late Ramesside Letters</i> , (1939; BAe 9)
MÄS	Münchner Ägyptologische Studien (Berlin/Munich/Mainz am Rhein)
MDAIK	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo (Mainz/Cairo/Berlin/Wiesbaden)
MIFAO	Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (IFAO) du Caire (Berlin/Cairo)
MPER	Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Oesterreichischen Nationalbibliothek Erzherzog Rainer (Wien)
MRE	Monographies Reine Élisabeth (Brussels/Turnhout)
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta (Louvain)
OMRO	Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Leiden)
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (Freiburg/Göttingen)
PapBrux	Papyrologica Bruxellensia (Brussels)

PdÄ	Probleme der Ägyptologie (Leiden/Boston/Köln)
PIHANS	Publications de l'Institut historique-archeologique neerlandais de Stamboul (Leiden)
PLBat	Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava (Leiden)
<i>RAD</i>	A. H. Gardiner, <i>Ramesside Administrative Documents</i> , London, 1948
<i>RdE</i>	Revue d'Égyptologie (Paris)
<i>RIDA</i>	Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquité (Brussels)
<i>SAK</i>	Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur (Hamburg)
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilisation (Chicago)
SASAE	Supplément aux ASAE (Cairo)
SDAIK	Sonderschrift des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo (Wiesbaden)
StudDem	Studai Demotica (Leuven)
URÄÄ	Urkunden zum Rechtsleben im alten Ägypten (Tübingen)
<i>Urk.</i>	<i>Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums</i> , 8 vols., ed. K. Sethe, H.W. Helck, H. Schäfer, H. Grapow, O. Firchow, 1903-1957 (Leipzig/Berlin)
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World (Atlanta)
<i>Wb.</i>	Wörterbuch der ägyptische Sprache, 7 vols., A.Erman and W. Grapow, 1926-1931
<i>WdO</i>	Die Welt des Orient: Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Kunde des Morgenlandes (Göttingen/Wupoertal)
<i>WZKM</i>	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes (Vienna)
<i>ZÄ</i>	Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde (Berlin/Leipzig)
<i>ZPE</i>	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik (Bonn)

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